COMMUNICATIVE REGIONALISM AND METROPOLITAN GROWTH
MANAGEMENT OUTCOMES
A CASE STUDY OF THREE EMPLOYMENT NODES IN BURNABY – AN INNER
SUBURB OF GREATER VANCOUVER

by

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A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR
THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES

(Planning)

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

(Vancouver)

September 2009

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Abstract

In North America, metropolitan growth management (MGM) has been significantly influenced by what I term communicative regionalism. The latter concept is rooted in communicative planning theory, and thus stresses dialogue and consensus in problem-solving. To explore the impact of communicative regionalism on actual growth management outcomes, this dissertation investigates a case study on the implementation of communicatively-informed regional plans in metropolitan or Greater Vancouver, Canada, as they have impacted three employment nodes in suburban Burnaby. The dissertation applied a three-part methodology, involving the collection of empirical data on outcomes, analysis of plan development against communicative planning criteria, and the critical application of an Actor Network Theory (ANT) lens to better examine the relationships and interactions of key government agencies during MGM plan development and implementation. The analysis suggested mixed results in terms of goal outcomes. Notably, it found that longstanding goals for attracting office employment to a designated Regional Town Centre had not been achieved to the desired degree. In explaining how this occurred, the analysis supplied empirical evidence of recent critiques made against communicative planning theory. Such results appear to support calls made by other theorists for the development of a post-communicative approach to theory and practice. The dissertation concludes with recommendations for five areas of more concerted research to help in this regard. First, researchers interested in planning processes would be wise to make more in-depth explorations of the link between power and action. Second, the presence and degree of instability in any given network of actors participating in growth management can create constraints or opportunities for this process. The role of instability needs to be better reflected and appreciated in communicative and/or post-communicative regionalism. Third, there must be greater recognition of differentiated stakeholder needs for consultation, as well as place-specific receptivities to consultation short cuts. Fourth, more detailed work is needed to develop best practices for the information-sharing aspects of growth management. Finally, there is a value in examining further the roles and skill sets of various individuals playing a translation role (i.e., bridging interests between two or more different stakeholders or groups). This translation role occurs in growth strategy development as well as other types of planning exercise, as a means of enabling both better information exchange and of facilitating the ongoing involvement of relevant stakeholders throughout the plan implementation phase.
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Regional Government

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Municipal Government

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<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>ALC</td>
<td>Agricultural Land Commission – the provincial agency charged with overseeing the integrity of the agricultural land reserve.</td>
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<td>ALR</td>
<td>Agricultural Land Reserve – areas designated in 1973 by the Province as set aside for farming activities.</td>
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<tr>
<td>ALRT</td>
<td>Automated Light Rail Transit (The Skytrain system referenced frequently in the dissertation is an ALRT system).</td>
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<td>ANT</td>
<td>Actor Network Theory.</td>
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<tr>
<td>BC Hydro</td>
<td>British Columbia Hydro and Power Authority – a provincial crown corporation charged with the production and transmission of electricity.</td>
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<td>BCIT</td>
<td>British Columbia Institute of Technology</td>
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<tr>
<td>BC Stats</td>
<td>British Columbia Statistics – part of the British Columbia Ministry of Finance and Corporate Services, which produces and verifies statistics.</td>
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<tr>
<td>CBD</td>
<td>Central Business District</td>
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<td>CMA</td>
<td>Census Metropolitan Area</td>
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<tr>
<td>CNR</td>
<td>Canadian National Railway – a federal crown corporation</td>
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<tr>
<td>FAR</td>
<td>Floor Area Ratio – a ratio frequently used in zoning bylaws to express the relationship between lot size and total building size.</td>
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<tr>
<td>FDP</td>
<td>Friends of Discovery Park</td>
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<tr>
<td>GIS</td>
<td>Geographic Information System</td>
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<tr>
<td>GVRD</td>
<td>Greater Vancouver Regional District, the regional district which encompasses all of metropolitan Vancouver. While today it refers to itself as Metro Vancouver, the GVRD’s letters patent remain unchanged.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HSBC</td>
<td>An international banking company with a division in Canada (formerly known as the Hong Kong and Shanghai Bank of Commerce).</td>
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<tr>
<td>IAC</td>
<td>Intergovernmental Advisory Committee – an <em>ad hoc</em> committee established under the British Columbia Local Government Act to provide technical guidance on the creation of a regional growth strategy.</td>
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<tr>
<td>ISTEA</td>
<td>Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act – US federal legislation giving MPOs (Metropolitan Planning Organizations) power over federal funding of regional transportation projects</td>
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<tr>
<td>LGA</td>
<td>Local Government Act, Province of British Columbia. Replaced a previous statute known as the Municipal Act.</td>
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<td>Acronym</td>
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<tr>
<td>LMRPB</td>
<td>Lower Mainland Regional Planning Board.</td>
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<td>LRP</td>
<td>Livable Region Plan, adopted in 1976.</td>
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<tr>
<td>LRSP</td>
<td>Livable Region Strategic Plan, adopted in 1995.</td>
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<tr>
<td>LRT</td>
<td>Light Rail Transit</td>
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<td>MGM</td>
<td>Metropolitan Growth Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MCD</td>
<td>Ministry of Community Development – the provincial agency which, as of April 2009, addresses municipal and regional government issues and legislation.</td>
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<tr>
<td>MPO</td>
<td>Metropolitan Planning Organization – an organization encouraged under US federal legislation</td>
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<td>NAFTA</td>
<td>North American Free Trade Agreement</td>
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<tr>
<td>NDP</td>
<td>New Democratic Party – a Canadian political party active in both provincial and federal levels of government.</td>
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<tr>
<td>OCP</td>
<td>Official Community Plan – the name of planning documents prepared by British Columbia municipalities (and, when planning for unincorporated areas only, by British Columbia regional districts). This term has specific legal significance because its parameters are spelled out in the LGA.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RGS</td>
<td>Regional Growth Strategy – the term used in British Columbia Legislation to refer to a plan for metropolitan and other forms of regional growth management. This term has specific legal significance, because its parameters are spelled out in the LGA.</td>
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<tr>
<td>RCS</td>
<td>Regional Context Statement – the term used to denote a legally required component in the Official Community Plan of any member municipality participating in a Regional Growth Strategy in the province of British Columbia.</td>
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<tr>
<td>RTC</td>
<td>Regional Town Centre – the term given to significant polycentric nodes in the GVRD’s various growth strategies.</td>
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<td>SCAG</td>
<td>Southern California Association of Governments</td>
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<tr>
<td>Socred</td>
<td>A short version of the name of the Social Credit Party of British Columbia, a Canadian political party in operation at the provincial level only through much of the 20th C., and now non-existent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAC</td>
<td>Technical Advisory Committee – an ad hoc committee of municipal staff providing advice on regional planning matters. At one point in time, all regional districts in British Columbia were required to have a Technical Advisory Committee. This legal requirement no longer exists.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UBCM</td>
<td>The Union of British Columbia Municipalities.</td>
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Acknowledgements

There is a popular cliché that says “it takes a village to raise a child”. To borrow from that cliché, it also takes a village to enable a doctoral student to graduate; and here is where I need to thank my “village”. First and foremost, to my committee members Penny Gurstein, Tom Hutton, and David Edgington: thank you for the many, many hours you have spent reading various drafts of my work and for asking the questions that needed to be asked. Doctoral advising is time-consuming and not particularly glamorous; and I truly appreciate your constructive efforts in helping me progress with my work. And, directly related to the research, I am indebted to Arilea Sill, the archivist for the City of Burnaby, whose efforts and well-organized system enabled me to sift through the many documents that might possibly shed some light on critical events in the development of my case study. I also wish to thank the anonymous interviewees who donated their time to this project.

Second, a big thank-you to Meggin Messenger and Alan Osborne, my Director and Executive Director who (along with other supportive colleagues at the BC Ministry of Community and Rural Development) have helped enable my double-life as provincial employee and doctoral student with tolerant work scheduling arrangements and a genuine curiosity about the research. On a related note, I would also like to thank the other academic and planning colleagues I have worked with over the years, whose insights and humour have helped me through some challenging situations. While too numerous to mention all, I have to single out Lynn Guilbalt, Ian Chang, Marg Picard, Terry Crowe, Suzanne Carter-Huffman,
David McLellan, Silvia Vilches, Rob Innes, Joyce English, Judy McLeod, Susan Elbe, and Alexandra Dmitrasinovic.

Third, I have relied tremendously on personal support from my friends and family. No matter how good the committee, doctoral research is still intensely challenging at an emotional level. Friends in the Departure Bay Book Club gave me an outlet for escaping my research when I needed to; and Eileen Baycroft also helped with the task of formatting this document. Nadia Carvalho, Megan Williams, and Angie Bowles have each done so much to help me cope by listening, problem-solving, and cheerleading. Other friends have been tolerant of my episodic and inconsistent communication patterns during this period. My Herle in-laws provided encouragement, occasional dog-sitting, and acceptance when I had to sneak off from family events to write. My parents Bev and Cliff Tate have been big champions, helping in too many ways to mention. Their enthusiastic support has kept me going during the rough patches. Finally, my loving husband Al Herle has been my anchor in this process, keeping me stable, reading many of my drafts, and showing me the snowdrops in the back yard when I most needed to see them.
Preface

This dissertation explores the impact of communicative regionalism on actual growth management outcomes in three suburban employment nodes in metropolitan Vancouver. It examines how interagency relations over time have shaped outcomes in these nodes. While the product of much research and reflection on planning, as with all research, it is tinged with personal perspectives and experiences. In my case the later have been informed by more than my scholarly life. They have also been influenced by my past work in two capacities: first, as a planning practitioner in the case study region being described, and secondly, in my current role as a manager of growth strategies for the senior government agency that sets the legislative parameters for growth management. So that the reader can better assess how these experiences might have impacted the research (both positively and negatively), this prologue is my attempt to highlight key factors of influence.

My experience in the case study region did not involve any employment with the municipality in which the three nodes studied were located (the City of Burnaby). During most of my municipal planning career I worked for other suburbs, two of which might arguably be considered “rivals” to Burnaby: the Cities of Richmond and Coquitlam respectively. If any biases have arisen in my research as a result of this experience, they will be of a somewhat mixed nature. On the one hand, both Richmond and Coquitlam have been somewhat envious of Burnaby’s rapid transit amenities (although for Richmond at least this envy is today dissipating with the construction of a new rapid line to its City Centre). Yet during the 1990s when I worked there, Richmond was making some similar decisions to
Burnaby in terms of providing for business park uses in industrial areas—an approach which has been viewed critically by many proponents of Metro Vancouver’s growth strategy. I participated directly in this to some extent as co-author of an industrial lands strategy in 1998, although by this time the policy decision to allow business parks had long since been made. One could argue that this experience could have made me concurrently envious of, and sympathetic towards, Burnaby. I should also acknowledge that I sat on a regional committee during much of the 1990s with planners from the GVRD and from other municipalities including Burnaby. I enjoyed my meetings with these colleagues; and I also recall being consistently impressed at the progressive and thoughtful ideas which came from the GVRD and Burnaby staff. I further recall many insightful discussions with Richmond colleagues about the realities of plan implementation (locally and regionally); and these helped me learn the art of bringing plans to life. In this regard, while supportive of regional planning efforts, I could at times be critical where I did not believe that regional plans and policies sufficiently considered local realities, including development pressures and angry citizens (who had the right to question you at public meetings and follow up the next day with phone calls and in-person visits to planning offices). This perspective has likely carried through into my research, largely in terms of its focus on how things really get done in metropolitan growth management settings, and how the different actors have influenced each other during the implementation process.

My senior government experience began in the Fall of 2007 when, three years into my doctoral program, I decided that I could benefit from returning to paid work. By this time I had relocated close to the provincial capital (Victoria) for personal reasons, and
serendipitously landed my current position as a regional growth strategies manager. My employers were intrigued by my doctoral studies. They were supportive enough both to provide me with leaves of absence when needed for research, and to give me generous interview access to three individuals who had all played pivotal roles in developing the growth strategies legislation still in place today.

This has been a particularly rich setting for a doctoral student. As a senior government employee who has been treated well, I cannot help but have sympathy for the senior government perspective. But I can still access memories from my local planning days. I have also benefitted from an accelerated and fascinating learning curve as I have while transitioned from a more localized planning outlook to a senior government perspective. For example, while employed municipally, I was simply less aware of the amount and complexity of strategizing required to create and nurture the legislative context for planning activities. This knowledge gap was later filled when I had the opportunity to have many informal discussions with provincial colleagues (who were not interviewed) about how growth strategies legislation works and what challenges are potentially posed with its implementation. Any misinterpretation of these conversations is, of course, solely my fault; but the opportunities for reflection they provided me helped form a critical part of my thinking. Additionally, I have had the opportunity to present my research results to senior management staff in my agency; and I remain hopeful that my research might in some small way assist in ongoing efforts to improve the planning context for British Columbia’s local governments.
As a final thought on important personal influences, I should also summarize my views on planning as a practice. I was raised with the notion that one should strive to do meaningful work; and for me the notion of “meaningful” is connected to making a difference. To this end, I have always believed that writing a plan is only part of a planner’s job—and that the other part should involve bringing the plan to reality either through follow-up work or at the least by anticipating the real on-the-ground opportunities for, and barriers to, implementation. Related to this is a belief that planners must empower themselves to make a difference, in whatever way they can do best given the talents, personalities, knowledge, and roles with which they are endowed. This position of empowerment necessarily involves reflecting upon the opportunities and constraints that exist in any unique professional situation. It is my hope that this dissertation will help those who read it to further consider their own scope for empowerment in a planning context.
Executive Summary

The broader purpose of this dissertation is to improve our knowledge of metropolitan growth management (MGM) planning and, in this regard, to ultimately foster positive outcomes. Its immediate goal is to better understand the implications of communicative (dialogue-based) planning applied at a regional scale. My basic premise is that theories like communicative planning (which can inform growth management and other types of planning exercise) pay insufficient attention to non-communicative actions and, ultimately, their consequences for on-the-ground outcomes. In analysing the specific case of Vancouver, Canada, where regional planning efforts have been strongly influenced by communicative planning theory, the dissertation calls attention to, and recommends next steps for, bridging this gap. While not calling for the wholesale abandonment of dialogue and deliberation, it suggests that an imbalanced emphasis on communicative or deliberative action must be tempered with greater appreciation for power-cognizant and instrumental action.

Regional-scale communicative planning, or communicative regionalism as I have labelled it, is informed by Habermasian critical theory; and the latter has been interpreted in the planning context by scholars like John Forester, Patsy Healey, and Judith Innes. Communicative planning encourages the development of plans through processes embodying the following characteristics: an emphasis on communicative or deliberative rationality and action (as opposed to instrument rationality and action); egalitarian public debate; the reduction of distortions in dialogue caused by the misuse of power; and the goal of consensus. The
desired outcome for such processes is that everyone is heard, and that there is universal agreement on the resulting plan and its recommended next steps. Critiques of communicative planning theory, however, call attention to four major weaknesses: its universalist view of the benefits and application of consensus; a problematic understanding and treatment of power; an unexamined preference for deliberative over representative forms of democracy; and insufficient acknowledgement of the value of instrumental action in achieving desired goals. Such weaknesses suggest that positive on-the-ground outcomes may not necessarily result from communicative planning processes—or at least not from communicative planning alone.

Metropolitan or Greater Vancouver was chosen as a case for examining these issues because of its early adoption of communicative regionalism (beginning with the Livable Region Plan completed in 1975), and because of its reputation for livability. My research found that communicative regionalism has neither been the sole cause of that livability, nor has its influence been entirely positive. Some successes did arise from communicative processes in the case. Yet two major types of initiative which arguably played the strongest role in implementing growth management goals from 1975 and beyond (the establishment of an agricultural land reserve which has provided growth containment, and construction of rapid transit infrastructure) were initiated via “command and control” decisions rather than communicative processes, by senior (provincial) governments on both left and right sides of the political spectrum (see Tomalty, 2002, and Chapter 5 of this dissertation for further discussion).
Moreover, at a more detailed level, communicative regionalism has not yielded the extent of employment concentration desired in successive metropolitan growth management (MGM) plans. My research studied three employment nodes in one city of the region to get a clearer sense of how on-the-ground outcomes compared with MGM plan goals for employment concentration. In one of the three nodes studied (Metrotown), the achievement of desired employment concentrations paled in comparison to office employment growth in dispersed business parks throughout the region. Conversely, the other two nodes which had not been designated for employment concentrations in MGM plans became repositories for such business parks. These results, while the culmination of a complex array of decisions and circumstances suggests that communicative regionalism has not produced one important desired goal—and yet this goal had been soundly endorsed by stakeholders who had been engaged in a highly deliberative planning process.

Furthermore, an overconfidence in the communicative process launched in the 1970s may have ultimately caused the Greater Vancouver Regional District (GVRD) to underestimate the power and authority of the senior level of government. Such underestimation, combined with political and economic instability of the 1980s, ultimately led to the cancellation of regional land use planning powers in 1983. Communicative planning efforts did help to keep MGM activities on life support until the restoration by the province of some land use authority in the mid 1990s. Yet the ability to continue with MGM activities after 1983 was also strongly aided by other efforts and factors not acknowledged in communicative planning models, such as strong trusting relationships between individuals in the different levels of
government, and the skills of particular individuals in “translating” the interests and concerns of their respective agencies to others in positions of power.

The research approach used in my case study contrasted actual outcomes (the first research dimension), such as those described above, with detailed analyses of plan development and implementation from the 19870s through to 2006. Two additional research dimensions were used for the latter purpose. Thus, a second dimension consisted of criteria for assessing the extent to which communicative regionalism was actually occurring in the case study region. This second, or communicative, dimension was important because it provided validation for the choice of case region—a city without communicative regionalist processes would not be a good test for the impacts of communicative regionalism. Moreover, performance on the criteria was helpful in pinpointing areas of difficulty in the processes undertaken in the case region.

The six communicative criteria focused around: providing an extensive and multifaceted information base to all stakeholders; a strong facilitation role for planners; stakeholder involvement in plan development; stakeholder involvement in plan implementation; the creation of important cultural shifts through and after the process; and the goal of consensus.

The third research dimension was instigated in response to literature critiquing communicative planning theory and the four problem areas listed above. It sought to compensate for such weaknesses by examining what else might have been occurring in
tandem with the communicative processes unfolding. This third research dimension sought to understand some of the relational factors which may have helped and hindered communicative planning, and to pay greater attention to the instrumental and power-cognizant actions which ultimately shaped outcomes. This dimension was predicated on a body of theory known as Actor Network Theory (ANT), which is analytical rather than normative. That is, unlike communicative planning theory, ANT does not prescribe a particular approach for conducting or structuring planning work. Instigated through the works of Callon and Latour, among others, ANT is particularly interested in how relationships between actors are localized. This interest focuses on with how attachments between actors, regardless of physical distances or status differences separating them, are expressed in, and then further shaped by, tangible objects (which can include plans and buildings), and in place-specific ways (Latour, 2007). The local nature of this analysis directly contrasts with the more universalist approach inferred in communicative planning theory (for discussion of the latter see Huxley and Yiftachel, 2000).

To capture ANT’s localization concern, I developed four questions for examining case study events, drawn from several ANT precepts in the literature. First, to what degree did connections between government actors in the case study and the presence of what was arguably an institutional growth management network influence both MGM processes and outcomes in the case study? Second, to what extent did degrees of instability or fluctuation in the network (contrasted with pockets of relative stability) impact MGM processes and outcomes? Third, what roles have various texts –both specific to the case and in the form of “meta-texts” or broader theories of ideal outcomes for MGM played in governing
relationships between actors and efforts to implement MGM goals? Finally, how have network boundaries (which delineate membership and participation) shifted in the course of MGM implementation, and how have these shifts impacted goal achievement and related outcomes?

By applying the communicative regionalism criteria and the ANT-derived questions, my research found several important things. While communicative regionalism was arguably present in the case, performance on two of the six criteria was somewhat weak. With the information-sharing criterion, what might have otherwise been a strong performance was weakened by a critical failure to adequately consider relevant information on local and global office market dynamics. Had such information been better acknowledged in the planning process, and thus reflected in ensuing plans, expectations for the regional town centres desired in regional plans could have been tempered, or else additional actions might have been instigated to mitigate the market trends that saw business parks dominate the regional office market (thereby weakening the Metrotown node’s performance as a transit-accessible employment centre). With the criterion for stakeholder involvement in implementation, performance was inconsistent, with the needs and interests of both senior government and the development community insufficiently considered or addressed.

The ANT-derived questions in my methodology allowed me to better pinpoint how and why the weak performances on the communicative regionalism criteria occurred. For example, network instability played a significant role in preventing the solid, consistent, and
complementary involvement of the provincial government in regional plan implementation. Such instability was in itself complex, particularly influenced by: major shifts in political actors; economic restructuring and a major recession in the 1980s; and an ongoing history of political rivalry between the Province and its largest city, in turn home to half of the Province’s population. It resulted in provincial actions which could alternately help MGM plan implementation (funding and building a rapid transit link to Metrotown) and potentially weaken it (e.g.: withdrawal from an agreed land assembly program in Metrotown; prioritizing land development in the Big Bend and Discovery Place nodes through highway investments and the construction of business parks catering to high tech clients on provincially-owned land).

The ANT questions also helped draw attention to some of the connections between actors which facilitated matters during such times of instability. Such connections included positive relations between the planning staff of member municipalities and the GVRD, enabling important technical information exchange in the development of Metrotown and ultimately reinforcing regional planning goals. They also included a strong pre-existing friendship and other good relationships between staff at the GVRD and a key provincial agency. These relationships facilitated the practice of “regional planning by stealth” from 1983 to 1995 when regional planning was technically illegal, enabling both agencies to manoeuvre through this period while avoiding an arbitrary provincial blockage to the activity.
By illustrating more deeply relational dynamics of a positive and negative nature, case study results indicated several critical and practical gaps in communicative regionalism. In this regard, the findings have implications for the works of communicative planning theorists Forester, Healey, and Innes who have championed this approach. The findings also reinforce the critical analysis of others, including Huxley and Yiftachel, Flyvbjerg, Murray, McGuirk and, to a lesser extent, Fainstein. For example, while both Forester’s and Innes’s works recognize that planners have some ability to shape attention and to adjust planning processes, neither scholar sufficiently acknowledges the strength of the forces which also exist in opposition to planners’ power (e.g. a senior government or a developer who does not build a desired land use). Moreover, both Forester’s work and Healey’s earlier work also failed to acknowledge the contingencies of place (e.g. governance structure; and a history with, and relative support for, growth management) which cause the relational dynamics potentially reinforcing or impeding communicative planning processes (and desired outcomes). Finally, all three theorists have missed opportunities to provide planners with constructive suggestions for coping with power differentials in the deliberation process; and launching instrumental (non-deliberative) forms of action needed to help realize the very goals developed through communicative planning processes.

What does this mean for future planning efforts? While one option could be to remedy these gaps within a communicative planning framework, my concern is that the communicative planning theory informing communicative regionalism ultimately has too much “baggage” for this approach to be productive. In particular, its links with modernism and universal prescription may be too strong. These are particularly evident when communicative methods
are adopted without sufficient consideration of whether they will be fruitful in a given context. This assessment arises from communicative planning theory’s: 1) frequent misapplication in real world settings; 2) genuine gaps vis-à-vis the workings of allocative and authoritative power in dialogue processes; 3) insufficient attention to context; and 4) commensurate (unrealistic) expectations for planners.

In examining communicative planning theory, this dissertation appears to support calls made by other theorists for the development of a post-communicative approach to theory and practice. This includes Alexander’s (2001) direct plea for a post-communicative theory which builds upon communicative theory’s desires for improved understanding between stakeholders, but which remedies its shortcomings by clearly rejecting the notion of dialogue as a panacea. A post-communicative theory would also be compatible with Sandercock’s (2004a) recommendation for more of a tool-box or situational approach to the use of theory. I believe that my dissertation will provide some useful material for others seeking to undertake these tasks, particularly within the context of MGM. MGM presents a uniquely complex type of planning challenge, given the multi-jurisdictional issues it addresses. No two metropolitan regions will find the same solutions to their growth management issues, but the following five suggestions might be of use in devising portions of the toolkit of direct relevance to MGM.

First, new theory (or at the very least a substantially revised communicative theory) must go much farther in acknowledging the link between power and action. This will involve
confronting the deep-seated distrust of power that Baum (1987) identified among many planners. In this regard, further case studies on the different ways in which power might be channelled through MGM processes (in positive and negative ways) would be of value. Related to this is the role of trust in MGM processes. Trust in itself may arguably represent a type of power, or at least be a precondition for the effective channelling of power. In this vein, it also merits further research in MGM settings. Another point to make about power is the need for more research in the MGM process into the possible network uses of power bases, possibly yielding typologies of such usage within MGM contexts. A final point regarding power is the need for more scholarly attention to ways of blending the needs of instrumental action with the needs of deliberative action. This will necessarily involve the consideration of how advocates of MGM planning recognize and make use of various forms of opportunity and constraint which may arise in specific contexts. Such variables may include time and resource allocations as well as political and project management timing considerations.

The second suggestion is to more closely examine and appreciate the impact of instability on planning processes and outcomes. Additional case study research, coupled with insights from behavioural and organizational psychology as well as sociology and political science, might help us develop new models for understanding how to better cope with, and take advantage of, instability in ways which might create better opportunities for MGM planning. In a related vein, more in-depth understandings of the relationship between instability and “interpretive drift” (Healey, 1997) from agreed goals would also be of value.
The third suggestion is to place greater emphasis in research and practice on effective differentiated stakeholder consultation approaches. This suggestion relates to the notion of fluctuating network boundaries, and advocates that planners undertaking MGM constantly find ways of ensuring that network boundaries are sufficiently flexible to promote appropriate stakeholder involvement at the right point in time. This raises the related need to ensure that large-scale public processes do not detract from consultation with other stakeholders (including representatives from other levels of government as well as developers) who may be more comfortable operating through less communicative approaches (e.g. preferring instead political influence approaches).

This also ties in with the critique regarding possible conflicts between direct and representative democracy. Senior government agencies tend to deal with a much larger number of localities than do regional agencies; and they thus have limited resources for engaging in direct democracy. As a result, they are far more reliant on representative democracy than may be the case with regional and local land use planners. Without sensitive accommodation of these differences, dialogue between senior and local agencies might otherwise be impossible. Further research could help provide new techniques for incorporating the results of such “off-line” types of discussion into broader public dialogue processes. A fourth and related suggestion would add to such research the development of best practices for using the information-sharing aspect of MGM planning, and broader regional planning efforts, as a way to build new (or strengthen existing) bases of support.
The fifth and final suggestion is to conduct further research into the skill sets needed for effective translation of goals and concerns between agencies, as well as specific conceptual tools translators draw upon. This research might be of particular use in helping to bring forward perspectives which are difficult or unpopular, and could facilitate the ongoing involvement of relevant stakeholders throughout the plan implementation phase. And, speaking more broadly, greater efforts within academic planning programmes to nurture the qualities which might ultimately assist with translation (over the longer term of students’ careers) would be beneficial.
Chapter 1 – Communicative Regionalism - Research Context and Approach

1.1 Introduction

Metropolitan growth management (MGM) has been directed at large cities in North America and Western Europe\(^1\) for over a century. The term *growth management* is largely of North American usage. It refers to land use planning that specifically responds to growth pressures through a range of policy and legal tools to channel new development into desired locations, where the desirability of those locations is set by some predetermined criteria. Over at least the last three decades, MGM planning in many North American jurisdictions has been informed by a theory which I describe as *communicative regionalism*. That is, metropolitan planning efforts in selected jurisdictions have relied on Habermasian (communicative) rationality, or a stress on dialogue and deliberation (ideally leading to consensus) as a means of problem-solving, as compared with an emphasis on technical and legalistic approaches to growth management. In using the term communicative regionalism, I refer largely to instances where metropolitan land use planning is informed by Habermasian rationality as expressed in communicative planning theory and where specific planning processes are structured along those lines. This practice has been unfolding in North American metropolitan areas to varying degrees since the 1980s. It has been documented by scholars like Margerum, (2002); Visser, (2004); Bollens, (1992); and Innes, (1992). Interestingly, however, one of the most lauded examples of MGM in North America —Portland Oregon—

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\(^1\) While the notion of MGM is frequently discussed in North American planning literature, in the United Kingdom it is most commonly associated with the term *regional spatial planning*. 
has relied significantly on a regulatory approach which was not built through communicative regionalism. See especially Lewis (1996) for discussion of its evolution.

Communicative regionalism need not encompass a particular governance structure. That said, it may often coincide with something known as "voluntary regionalism" (Visser, 2004), where a regional planning agency lacks the legal ability to implement plans and must instead promote implementation or ensure conformance to regional goals by its component or affected municipalities. In such cases the agency must therefore rely on other (non-legislative) means to encourage municipalities to manage growth within their own boundaries in ways which will provide a broader regional benefit, such as the reduction of new low density and inefficiently serviced greenfield sites (e.g. urban sprawl). According to Visser, voluntary regionalism tends to be more effective where the regional planning agency is providing other services of value to participating local governments, such as data collection and research services –in addition to setting regional goals. However, Margerum’s (2002) growth management research in Queensland, Australia suggests that communicative regionalism can also unfold in environments where there is more structural support (in terms of mandates and tangible powers) for regional initiatives.

In this dissertation, I argue that inherent weaknesses in communicative regionalism, and in its foundational anchor of communicative planning theory, may detract from realizing certain MGM outcome goals², because of its imbalanced emphasis on communicative (process-based) action, combined with an unwillingness to examine the value of instrumental actions

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² These goals are described in detail in Chapter 4.
and their interplay with dialogue. The latter are not only needed to realize the very outcomes which may be articulated as desired through dialogue-based planning, they also shape ongoing relationships between the various actors implicated in a given planning exercise.

Communicative regionalism stresses a particular process for planning efforts –that is, it discusses how planning should be undertaken (e.g. who should do it, using what knowledge). As a process, it has several weaknesses (discussed in more detail in Chapter 2). First among these is a somewhat modernistic belief that the universal application of consensus methods to any given problem will produce positive outcomes. Second is a problematic treatment of power, given the reality that different actors in a planning process interact with unequal power relations. (While power generally relates to an ability to act, the complexities associated with defining it will be discussed further in Chapter 2.) The third weakness consists of an unexamined preference for direct as opposed to representative democracy, which may be problematic when larger scales of government are involved. Finally, as noted above, the fourth centres on an approach to action which de-emphasizes the instrumental (i.e., tactical) aspects which might otherwise facilitate the realization of mutually agreed goals.

Of course, MGM is also informed by theories focusing more specifically on desired urban form outcomes, such as the containment of growth or the focusing of new development in one or more specific nodes. This distinction between process and outcomes draws from Faludi (1973) and Yiftachel (1989). The two types of theory need not be incompatible; however, as my research will show, there are significant tensions between them. These tensions are most evident in their different notions surrounding the type of action to be taken.
in a given planning exercise. Research into ways of redressing this imbalance is essential. This is particularly important given today's preoccupations with global warming and greenhouse gas emissions. (A significant portion of the latter is attributed to the excessive use of single-occupant vehicles\(^3\), which are in turn presumed to result from uncontrolled urban sprawl, i.e., failures in MGM).

My aim is to discuss these tensions between process and outcomes in a grounded way (in the context of a specific time and place) with a view to ultimately improving the process side of how we undertake MGM, so as to make better outcomes possible. Such outcomes recognize that more than just deliberative action is needed to achieve desired results. By critiquing communicative regionalism and communicative planning theory, my intention is not to demonize communicative approaches to planning, or suggest that their deliberative aspects be abandoned wholesale. Rather, my goal is to point out areas where they are significantly incomplete. Armed with this information, theorists will then have two choices: to either use it to fill in the gaps of the existing theory, or to move towards entirely new theoretical approaches.

If communicative regionalism (as an application of communicative planning theory in addressing regional scale growth management) has produced problematic outcomes, what are these? Of particular concern in this dissertation are difficulties at pivotal milestones in implementing plans for specific urban nodes, or concentrations of housing and jobs intended

\(^3\) Carbon dioxide emissions are believed to play a key role in climate change. At a global level, 17% of those emissions were produced by motor vehicles in 1990 (Replogle, 1990, n.p.). In some jurisdictions, however, that figure is much higher. For example, in British Columbia, where most electricity is generated through hydrological power (versus coal-fired plants), motor vehicles are the source of 38% of carbon dioxide emissions (British Columbia, 2008).
to reduce the need for lengthy commutes. (These nodes respond to a particular set of MGM outcome theories, reviewed further in Chapter 3.) While these nodes play a regional role, their development relies on many local-level (micro-scale) decisions.

Such decisions will include: which developments to approve or reject; how they should be designed; and what infrastructure is needed to serve them. Where these nodes are connected by rapid transit (e.g. as part of a conscious strategy to enhance their environmental benefit), regional and/or senior government investment decisions may also play a role in nodal outcomes.

Thus MGM, perhaps to an even more complex extent than neighbourhood planning, depends on the cooperation of, and willingness to act, by multiple stakeholders. If the actions taken to engage this cooperation are predicated on communicative assumptions, and communicative theory contains inherent weaknesses with regard to charting a course for institutional implementation actions, there could be gaps in desired results. By better understanding the interplay of multi-stakeholder decisions (including their end results), we might learn how to improve the relationship between critical micro-scale planning work and the regional urban form objectives sought in broader MGM efforts, and the planning processes which influence them both.

There have, of course, been some earlier efforts to consider both the uses and limits of dialogue in regional planning processes. Such efforts have been made both from the perspective of how governance structures could be shaped by, or could enable, a more
conscious use of dialogue (Foster, 1997; Hamin, 2003; and Visser, 2004), and from a broader communicative planning emphasis (Innes, 1992; Margerum, 2002). Yet the relationship of communicative regionalism to actual MGM outcomes (i.e., to metropolitan form and the successful creation of suburban employment nodes) has not yet been sufficiently explored. There have been separate assessments of MGM outcomes (Deakin, 1989; Lewis, 1996; Nelson and Moore, 1996; Nelson and Peterman, 2000; Dawkins and Nelson, 2003; Nelson and Dawkins, 2004), as well as recent efforts by metropolitan regions themselves to assess the results of their MGM implementation through benchmarks, and State of the Environment Reporting (GVRD 2000, 2001a, 2002, 2004a and 2004b, 2005a; and SCAG, 2007a). There have also been broader comments on the relationships of communicative planning in general to outcomes (Tewdwr-Jones and Allmendinger, 1998; Richardson, 1996; Flyvbjerg, 1998; Healey, 2003). Nonetheless, the link between process- and outcome-based issues at the metropolitan scale has been missing. This lack of attention to outcomes is unfortunate, given the growing needs and expectations for MGM to solve some pressing environmental sustainability concerns (Beatley, 2000; Zovanyo, 1998; Wheeler, 2004).

1.2 Proposed Case Study and Research Questions

As noted above, my hypothesis is that communicative regionalism (as understood from the literature on communicative planning theory written to date) may potentially hinder the implementation of MGM goals. To explore it, I will focus on a case study in the metropolitan region of Vancouver, Canada (Greater Vancouver). I argue that, in many respects, Vancouver has epitomized communicative regionalism even before its more widespread popularity in the 1980s and 1990s. It has also manifested communicative
regionalism in both a purely voluntary form as well as under somewhat more structured (i.e., regulated) conditions. Such variation within a single place provides for a particularly rich analysis, and useful learning potential for metropolitan agencies possessing both weak and strong planning powers.

This case study will look in very specific detail at institutional planning and policy discussions and actions shaping three sub-cases: suburban employment nodes with major implications for the implementation of Greater Vancouver’s MGM plans. These nodes are located within a single suburban municipality (the City of Burnaby) and are respectively known as: Metrotown, the Big Bend Area, and Discovery Place (see Figure 1.1 for map showing locations). In doing so, it examines the relationships between actors at senior, regional and local government levels as the nodes were created and shaped. One of these nodes (Metrotown) was also planned to include residential uses; and while ultimately the desired housing concentrations for these nodes have been achieved with remarkable success, the employment expectations set out in various regional-scale land use plans have not been fulfilled (GVRD, 2004a and 2004b).

One might surmise that these results relate to a greater level of difficulty in creating policy-driven employment spaces, as compared with policy-driven residential nodes. Yet there is little research evidence to either confirm or refute this conclusion, other than empirical results demonstrating the growing proliferation of office uses outside of nodal areas

4 throughout North America, and recent literature hinting that there is still an insufficient

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4 A type of pattern which Lang (2003) labels “edgeless cities”, and which is discussed further in Chapter 4.
understanding on the part of land use planners regarding some of the basic locational needs of industry (see Ryan, 2005). Interestingly, while Ryan makes no such claim about planners per se, her 2005 study of longitudinal data for office and industrial properties in metropolitan San Diego, combined with her reading of Sivitanidou’s (1996) work, suggests that there may have been some past over-simplification of the extent to which freeway access is more significant than agglomeration economies in determining office location. In particular, her findings suggest that, while highway access remains important to office and industrial employment uses, agglomeration economies appear to take precedence over proximity to both freeway access and light rail transit station access in determining office and industrial location preferences. Moreover, office properties do not seem to benefit from, or illustrate greater willingness to pay for, access to nearby light rail transit stations.
Greater Vancouver is an exemplary setting for an analysis of metropolitan planning processes and their outcomes. While known today as Metro Vancouver\(^5\), for most of the time period analysed in this case (1966-2006), the region was referred to as Greater Vancouver; and the political agency charged with regional responsibilities was known as the Greater Vancouver Regional District (GVRD). Greater Vancouver has a strong tradition of MGM dating back

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\(^5\) In 2007 the regional agency previously known as the Greater Vancouver Regional District endorsed a name change to “Metro Vancouver”, largely for marketing and “branding” purposes; however, the agency’s letters patent still reflect the previous name (Interviewee B, 2008).
more than four decades; and my choice of Vancouver for this case study is based in large part on the region’s apparent success in more global terms.

Greater Vancouver is an attractive place, recognized as the world’s most livable city by the Economic Intelligence Unit (CNN, 2005). It is home to over 2.1 million people\(^6\) (Statistics Canada, 2007a) – half of the population of British Columbia — and the source of 47% of provincial jobs\(^7\). As shown in Figure 1.2 below, this puts Vancouver as Canada’s third largest metropolis. On an international scale, it is comparable in population size to cities such as San Diego and Greater Manchester. It is also a region which has become increasingly diverse in its population. As of 2006, 40% of Metro Vancouver was foreign-born (Statistics Canada, 2006 Census), making its population proportionally more diverse than Miami, Los Angeles or New York City (Statistics Canada 2006, Catalogue No. 97-557-XWE2006001). Two-thirds of Vancouver’s foreign-born residents came originally from Asia and the Middle East, with the top source countries including China (17% of GVRD foreign-born residents); India (14%); Hong Kong (9%); and the Philippines (8%) (ibid.). Such diversity has enabled a complex set of corporate as well as socio-cultural networks linking the city’s metropolitan area to the Asia-Pacific, fuelled in part by immigration and tourism (Hutton, 1998, pp. 148-150).

\(^6\) BC Stats, the statistical agency of the Government of British Columbia frequently challenges census counts, and in previous years has had some success in getting census totals revised. At present, BC Stats provides a slightly higher population estimate for 2006, at 2,180,737.

\(^7\) Based on 977,615 employed members of the Metro Vancouver labour force working there in 2006 (Statistics Canada, 2006 Census), and 2,078,810 employed members of the BC labour force working in BC in 2006 (op. cit).
If Greater Vancouver is the product of communicative regionalism (as opposed, for example, to being largely the product of rational comprehensive planning), then Greater Vancouver’s array of parks, protected agricultural lands, and relatively compact settlement areas around many of its rapid transit nodes would seem at first blush to recommend communicative regionalism as a strategy. Such a position would not be far from the perspective taken by Harcourt et al (2007) who, while not communicative theorists, have been strong practitioner advocates for many of communicative theory’s principles. Of course, such an assumption
presumes that the relationship between communicative planning and positive outcomes is an automatic one—an assumption which this dissertation questions. But what positive outcomes are evident? Over the last decade land use patterns appear to have made sustainable transportation choices like public transit and walking more feasible. For example, an increasing amount and proportion of new housing in the region has been built in close proximity to rapid transit stations. While in 1996 roughly 71% of all journeys to work in the region occurred via single-occupant vehicle, by 2006 this proportion had decreased to just over 67% (Statistics Canada in GVRD, 2008, p. 3). The proportion of transit commutes in this period grew more than two percentage points from just over 14% to nearly 17% during this same period (ibid.).

Yet on closer examination, communicative regionalism has neither been the sole driver of these successes, nor has its influence been fully positive. This is particularly apparent when one considers the evolving relationships between different levels of government with a stake in MGM outcomes, and when one examines the development of planned regional employment nodes in the form of regional town centres (RTCs), which may not have entirely fulfilled expectations. Communicative regionalism has clearly produced some successes. For example, it may have ultimately helped the metropolitan planning agency to survive during a critical period in the 1980s, after its regional planning powers had been legislated out of existence by the senior government in 1983 (an event discussed in Chapter 5). This seemingly arbitrary legislation was the culmination of a lengthy power struggle between the metropolitan planning agency and the provincial government. Nonetheless, a dependence on communicative regionalism may have also exacerbated tensions during this power struggle;

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8 Walking and cycling remained roughly constant on a proportional basis.
and such heightened tensions in the wake of sudden economic instability ultimately sparked the 1983 crisis. At the same time, overemphasis on communicative regionalism may have obscured the rise of market trends which were at odds with an important part of the region’s growth management vision, namely the rising popularity of business parks (see Chapter 8 and Chapter 10 for further discussion). Moreover, as I will argue in the case study discussion (Chapters 5 through 9), communicative regionalism may have also led to some missed opportunities for MGM goal implementation at the micro-level which could have set an important, beneficial momentum for ongoing MGM efforts.

Within the Greater Vancouver case, it is my belief that critical successes (and failures) in these three employment nodes may have ultimately been driven by different approaches to, and techniques for, channelling power. This belief complements (without necessarily validating) Tomalty’s (2002) view that the provincially-established agricultural land reserve has done more to manage growth than any regional planning efforts.

While at times such approaches and techniques were compatible with the dialogue emphasis and stakeholder inclusion principles of communicative regionalism, certain milestones in Greater Vancouver's MGM history (with direct implications for these nodes) were not. For example, the establishment of an automated light rail transit line (ALRT) known as Skytrain occurred as a result of somewhat unilateral senior government action, even though transit route selection did reinforce critical precepts of a previous regional MGM strategy, known as the Livable Region Plan (LRP). Moreover, I argue that two of the three nodes (the Big Bend
and Discovery Park nodes), while implicitly accepted in MGM plans since the mid-1960s, eventually came into conflict with MGM objectives for the third node (Metrotown).

Specifically, Metrotown was expected to provide the bulk of Burnaby’s employment over the longer term; and most of this employment was expected to be office-related. As a result of varied factors to be discussed in Chapters 7 through 8, employment and population in Metrotown have grown extensively; but on a proportional basis more new job growth in Burnaby has occurred outside Metrotown than within it (see Table 1.1 below)\(^9\). The latter trend is not expected to abate any time soon. (Together the Big Bend Area and Discovery Place have the equivalent of nearly three-quarters of the Metrotown jobs.) While Discovery Place is getting close to reaching its planned capacity (Cushman Wakefield LePage, 2009a), Big Bend is only half-way there. Moreover, Big Bend could eventually come close to Metrotown’s current employment total by reaching 18,000 jobs in all categories of employment (Interviewee F, 2008). Unlike Metrotown, however, neither of these nodes is directly served by rapid transit; although Discovery Place is located near a major bus corridor connecting two rapid transit lines (\textit{ibid.}).

\(^9\) Note that employment statistics are a reflection of all employment job types and do not distinguish between office, retail or industrial jobs. Comparable data over time is not available, as data by specific neighbourhood frequently involves custom data run by Statistics Canada at considerable extra cost to the local government. At this point in time, no custom order appears to have been made for historical data for these employment nodes.
Table 1.1 Comparative Employment Data – Metrotown, Big Bend and Discovery Place

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2006 Total Jobs</th>
<th>Proportion of Total Municipal Employment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Metrotown</td>
<td>22,900</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Big Bend Area</td>
<td>9,500</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discovery Place</td>
<td>8,150</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rest of Burnaby</td>
<td>74,460</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Metro Vancouver, 2009a, based on 2006 Census data

As I will show later in this dissertation, such conflicts did not initially arise so much due to the implementing municipal government’s failure to heed the MGM plan, as they did from the inherent contradictions in the plan’s very goals. And, to some extent, these contradictory goals were exacerbated in part by an over-reliance on communicative regionalism and an overconfidence in its ability to achieve results. These MGM goal contradictions became apparent in the face of significant market and political instability, including an economic recession which hit British Columbia harder than many other Canadian provinces and senior government removal of existing regional planning powers, which will be discussed further in Chapter 5. Another important trend which exacerbated plan contradictions was the growing popularity of the business park configuration to house large concentrations of employment. While a commonly understood notion in the popular press, and in market handbooks on how to develop business parks (see for example Frej et al., 2001), scholarly literature explaining the emergence of business parks is scant, with the exception of some discussion in Lang (2003). Furthermore, the exploration of such contradictions was suppressed, in part, by
complex political conditions which made the questioning of goals (at a time when such efforts might have possibly made a difference) untenable. This is because during the period in question (during the late 1980s), significant goal questioning may have shaken a fragile coalition of municipal governments holding the GVRD together (discussed further in Chapter Four). It is quite possible that the coalition could not afford significant debate on growth management goals and still remain in existence.

To assess these issues and their implications for communicative regionalism, the dissertation explores the following research questions:

1. What has communicative regionalism (metropolitan-scale planning which accepts and embodies communicative planning theory) meant for plan implementation for selected suburban employment nodes in the Greater Vancouver region from 1966 to 2006?
2. Based on events and results for the three employment nodes studied (Metrotown, Big Bend and Discovery Place), what potential strengths and limitations does communicative regionalism pose for growth management outcomes?

These questions respond directly to Huxley and Yiftachel’s plea for planning theorists to better understand planning itself by examining its role “as a state-related strategy in the creation and regulation of space, populations, and development” (2000, p. 339).
1.3 How This Dissertation is Structured

The remainder of this dissertation is structured as follows. Chapter Two provides important groundwork by elaborating on the theoretical foundation of communicative regionalism – communicative planning theory. This background will give the reader a clearer understanding of the “process” aspect of regional planning practice (i.e., how planning is to be undertaken). Using Friedmann’s (1987) definition of planning as the application of knowledge to action, while the “process” aspect of planning is strongly related to both knowledge and action components, it has a particularly strong link to knowledge. In essence, whatever process one chooses will depend on the theory of knowledge that one adheres to. Chapter 2 thus also looks at the foundational knowledge behind communicative approaches to planning.

Chapter 3 provides a discussion of the methodology used in the research. Using the overarching framework of a case study analysis, the methodology draws from the theoretical literature described in Chapter 2, and is shaped in a three-part approach. The first part or dimension is drawn directly from communicative planning theory and uses a set of six criteria against which to assess the level of communicative planning occurring within various regional planning exercises. The second dimension recognizes that, in order to critique communicative regionalism, a methodology based solely on its foundational theory would be incomplete. The second part thus relies on an additional theoretical lens to compensate for
anticipated gaps. It takes the form of four questions drawn from my reading of Actor Network Theory (ANT) and seeks to explore some of the relational events and processes between relevant factors which impacted outcomes. The third dimension is purely empirical, linking the results of the various processes to outcomes.

Chapter 4 looks more carefully at the history of MGM and the contemporary application of both process and outcome theories for MGM in Canada and the United States. It also includes some preliminary ideas, drawn from other examples, of what communicative regionalism looks like in an actual metropolitan setting. These preliminary ideas include reflections on the parameters which might impact the relationships between various actors concerned with growth management. Chapter 5 provides an overview of metropolitan planning in the Greater Vancouver region from 1966 to 2006. This overview includes milestone events and the respective roles played by regional and more senior levels of government. It also assesses the degree of communicative regionalism present in GVRD plans, and manifest in provincial-regional relationships. It is followed by Chapter 6 which focuses on the inner suburb of interest to the analysis (the City of Burnaby) including its early history and a review of its major planning tools. Chapters 7 through 9 delve into case study details, with each chapter providing a discussion of how the relevant actors worked together (and sometimes failed to) in the development of three employment nodes: Metrotown, the Big Bend Industrial Area; and Discovery Place (see Figure 1.1 earlier). Finally, Chapter 10 draws together the major findings from the case study.
Chapter 2 – Theoretical Foundations of Communicative Regionalism

Chapter 1 stated that a practice labelled communicative regionalism has been unfolding in many North American metropolitan areas particularly since the 1980s; and it also claimed that, as a theory of how to undertake planning, the inherent weaknesses of communicative regionalism may ultimately risk yielding problematic outcomes. This chapter provides more background on communicative regionalism through its theoretical underpinnings in communicative rationality and communicative planning theory. It begins by further explaining the rationale for examining communicative planning theory (Section 2.1) and by placing communicative planning theory in relief against other process-based planning theories, grouped according to the prevailing type of relationship between the planner and the community being planned (Section 2.2). It then describes the origins and some key theorists of the communicative planning school (Section 2.3) followed by the major critiques of communicative planning (Section 2.4). Preliminary examples of communicative regionalism outside of the case study, i.e., the application of communicative planning assumptions and techniques to regional growth management, will be provided towards the end of Chapter 4.
2.1 Why Critique Communicative Planning Theory Instead of Other Theories?

It is important to first clarify the range of possible theories with the potential to further our understanding of MGM, both broadly and as applied to a particular case study. In discussing different approaches to regional planning\textsuperscript{10}, Friedmann and Weaver (1979), and later Hodge and Robinson (2001), acknowledge several different types of theoretical influence on MGM and other forms of regional planning. Distilling from the latter, and drawing also from Faludi (1973) and Yiftachel (1989), I find it useful to continue distinguishing regional planning theories between those that address how the process of planning should unfold (e.g. who should do it, using what knowledge), and those that specify what the desired end state or outcome of the exercise should be (focusing on the ideal spatial model for growth distribution in an individual region).

Of course, Allmendinger (2002) suggests that to use this dual typology is still to be largely framed by a modernist world view, which compartmentalizes knowledge and over-emphasizes its technical forms. This is because such a typology ignores the many ways in which different theories draw upon distinct traditions of social thought, as well as the broader contexts through which they are applied. I acknowledge Allmendinger’s critique.

Nonetheless, I argue that it remains useful for both teaching and for guiding practical

\textsuperscript{10} The terms regional planning and MGM are not completely synonymous; but since MGM is a subset of regional planning, for the purposes of this dissertation, I will use the two as equivalent, unless specified otherwise. A region can exist at many scales, and can be defined for many purposes ranging from addressing common economic issues faced by contiguous communities to protecting water basins to managing urban growth. In recognition of this variety, Hodge and Robinson define regional planning as meeting one of two possible needs: either “the need to solve problems associated with a particular project or ongoing development situation... [or] the desire to attain an improved regional situation” (2001, p. 9).
responses to contemporary MGM problems, by highlighting two broad currents with direct
(if frequently overlapping and contradictory) influences on planning practice today. This
proposed highlighting is analogous to an x-ray which provides a closer view of a diseased
tissue, to better focus temporarily on a specific aspect of a problem. This temporary focus
need not result in a compartmentalized solution if the clinician then goes on to assess the
relationship between what was observed via x-ray and other dimensions of the problem
within the body, as a means of ultimately developing a more holistic treatment approach.
With further understanding of those process and outcome currents, I believe that we can
similarly formulate a more integrated approach to metropolitan planning.

Partly informed by empirical studies outside the planning discipline, and partly given
opposition to technocratic approaches, there have been shifts in both process and outcome
types of planning theories over the course of the last half-century. Process-based theorists
have, however, largely omitted considerations addressed by outcome theories and empirical
studies (Lauria and Whelan, 1995; Huxley and Yiftachel, 2000; also acknowledged by
Healey, 1997). The following discussion briefly summarizes the main process theories
impacting MGM, with outcome-based theories described in more detail in Chapter 3.

2.2 Process-Based Planning Theories (How Planning Should Unfold)

While one could categorize planning in a variety of ways\footnote{see, for example, Friedmann’s 1987 taxonomy of planning traditions, pp. 74-75 and of course Allmendinger’s 2002 suggestions for developing post-positivist typologies}, a simple approach looks at three
broad groupings of process-based theories, based on the relationship between planner and

\[\text{process-based planning theories (how planning should unfold)}\]
community. I label these groupings: 1) planning for the community; 2) planning with the community; and 3) planning as part of the community.

2.2.1 Planning for the Community

Theories in the first group (planning for the community) are rooted in the rational-comprehensive tradition. Key theorists who have written on this approach include Meyers and Banfield (1955); and Kent (1964). In this type of theory, planners as experts are asked to synthesize an appropriate range and quantity of knowledge (often primarily technical) and to then apply this synthesis to a recommended plan or approach for solving community problems. Decisions about whether to accept the plan would then be made by politicians, rather than by individual community stakeholders or stakeholder agencies. Much, but not all, of the knowledge embodied in this synthesis tends to presume that universalized knowledge can be applied to yield beneficial results. It also presumes that political decisions are open to a strong influence from technical rationality. Finally, it relies on representative, rather than direct democracy to deliver outcomes which will be in the public interest.

Despite the rational-comprehensive school’s important public health successes, particularly in improving sanitary conditions (Peterson, 1979; Porter, 1994, especially pp. 8-20; and Boyer, 1986), critiques of the approach began to emerge in the mid to late 1960s. Some of these critiques related to the amount of synthesis created by bureaucrats before they reached the point of political decision. These included Lindblom’s important work, *The Intelligence* 12

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12 Porter’s and Boyer’s work respectively describe sources of opposition to rational comprehensive planning in health reforms prior to this time.
of Democracy (1965). Noteworthy for its critique of single-agent synthesis, Lindblom’s work argued (among other things) that it was impossible for one mind (or organization) to adequately synthesize all the knowledge needed to solve a particular problem because it could not fully:

- Absorb all information applicable to a problem;
- Distinguish between facts and values (which often overlap) and appropriately consider all values; and
- Address and acknowledge failures (ibid., pp. 138-144).

According to Hoch (1994), another weakness of the rational-comprehensive model was its simplistic and instrumental consideration of power, which ignored the ways preferences can be transformed when two or more actors confront each other in the process of furthering their own goals (p. 11). Other critiques (e.g. Davidoff, 1965; Arnstein, 1969; Friedmann, 1973, 1981) became a more explicit rallying point for those advocating greater community involvement in planning.

Yet, while this model is seldom described as desirable in contemporary planning theory literature, as of the late 1960s, the rational-comprehensive model still dominated teaching at North American University planning programs (Hightower, 1969). Moreover, aspects of it still persist today in bureaucratic planning practice (Baum, 1996a; Seasons, 2003; Hostovsky, 2006). A relevant example of this could be said to occur in senior government activities to control growth management, some of which have a high degree of regulation (Bollens, 1992;
Gale, 1992; Nelson and Dawkins, 2004; see also Hodge and Robinson, 2001, Chapters Eight and Nine). The regulation-centred approach may require all local plans, or approvals of a given size or character, be approved by that senior government before taking final effect. One possible explanation for the persistence of the rational-comprehensive model might be that it pays greater attention to—even if it may not deliver on—planning outcomes.

2.2.2 Planning With the Community

Theories in the second group, planning with the community, include the communicative planning approach analyzed in this dissertation as well as its precursors (e.g. Friedmann’s social learning approach, 1981 and 1987; see also Friedmann and Abonyi, 1976). While their influences and some precursor works began as early as the 1960s (e.g. Arnstein’s ladder of participation, 1969), this group began to flourish from the late 1970s through the 20th c.; and it still has strong currency. I have used the phrase planning with the community to reflect the desire for greater dialogue and knowledge exchange between planners and their non-planner clients. I have also used this phrase to indicate the group’s implicit view that planners remains somewhat apart from the community itself.

Hoch refers to this group as pragmatic planning theorists, who share a common link to John Dewey’s notion of encouraging true deliberation around the issues and proposals which a community faces (1994, p. 294). Many, but not all of the theorists in this camp are from the Communicative school. (Exceptions include Schon, 1983; and Friedmann, 1973; 1978; 1981; 1987; and 1993, who take a social learning approach influenced by Dewey, but do not directly share the Habermasian assumptions of the Communicative school). As a
deliberation-based set of theories, particular emphasis is placed on the value of information exchange and its role in changing perceptions (Hoch, 1994; Innes, 1998; Forester, 1989 and 2001). This information emphasis will be discussed in greater detail in Section 2.3.

2.2.3 Planning as Part of the Community

The third approach, planning as part of the community, occurs where planners do not see themselves as separate from the community, but in fact as part of it. Planners who are part of the community (in the sense I use here) can belong in both literal and metaphorical ways. In the broader sense, planners who are part of the community can be said to “belong” if they do not see themselves as neutral / distant actors, but as engaged and involved in a human way. Thus, even if s/he has no “official” status in that community, a planner who demonstrates this third type of relationship recognizes her or his own subjectivity, personal characteristics, and affiliations which might affect the planning process, and tries to deal with them in a constructive way. He or she is also not afraid to be political when needed. This third type of planning may ultimately provide a way forward in bridging the gap between process and outcome needs in the metropolitan planning process –a notion which could be realized through the recommendations proposed in Chapter Ten.

Process-based theories in this third group thus share an acknowledgement of the planner’s role as an individual social actor; however, there is considerable variety in terms of the prescriptions for how that role should unfold. Foucauldian theories of planning (Flyvbjerg, 1998) advocate that the planners respond strategically to power in order to achieve their goals; but as Alexander (2001) observes, such theories provide little direction about what
those goals should be (p. 313). Sandercock’s (2003) post-modern planning theory advocates that planners hold transformative values (i.e., that they seek social and economic justice), and that they develop six literacies (pp. 76-80), drawing on particular tools for acting on specific situations (p. 159). Baum (1983, 1997) has focused on the constructive aspects of conflict (which may be somewhat compatible with what is termed agonistic dialogue and planning by Brand and Gaffikin, 2007). Baum (1987, 1997) recognizes the discomfort conflict creates, while also appreciating conflict’s potential for defining and sustaining communities in ways that ultimately help the latter survive together. Hoch hints that planners in the third group must constantly decide in each new circumstance which role they will play, “navigat[ing] between the autonomy of expertise and their responsibility to others” (1994, p. 296), taking what I would label a “menu-based” approach, where one chooses modes of acting depending on their suitability to a given context.

2.2.4 Relevance to MGM Outcomes

All three groups of process-based theory have potential relevance for understanding MGM outcomes. Yet, as Soja (1996), Allmendinger (2002), and Pallagst (2006) infer, planning theory literature tends to focus on its own narrow cluster, rather than elaborating on complementarities between two or more groups of them. This occurs where an author either critiques a particular body of theory or supports it through case studies. Conversely, as Friedmann (1995) and Alexander (2001) observe, there is both overlap and complementarity between the groups. In particular, Alexander’s notion of interdependence, Hoch’s selective approach, and Sandercock’s call for a “usefully promiscuous approach to planning theory”,
help clarify how practicing planners might effectively choose and adapt useful aspects of these different theoretical groups—in ways which develop further socially beneficial outcomes.

So if these theories are not isolated from each other, why focus on communicative planning among all the other process theories? Simply put: because theorists and practitioners alike have highlighted communicative planning as the dominant process paradigm for the 1980s and 1990s (Innes, 1992; Fischler, 2000; Healey, 2003; Allmendinger and Tewdwr-Jones, 2002; Murray, 2006). Moreover, communicative planning models continue to receive important scholarly attention. And, as the dominant process paradigm, communicative planning has been frequently applied in the real world—often in less than ideal ways.

While theory often influences practice indirectly, particularly in the process stream, communicative planning theory has actually become quite popular in practice. Murray (2006) describes three clusters of reasons for this popularity, summarized from other research. These include:

- philosophical rationales (in terms of enhancing democracy and fairness);
- practical rationales, which include an improved ability to handle complex information and perspectives on planning matters, as well as greater (apparent) willingness of participants in communicative planning processes to accept and implement final plan recommendations; and

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13 Also anticipated by Allmendinger, 1998
• ideological rationales, where communicative approaches to governance can facilitate
government down-sizing, by reducing bureaucratic involvement and costs (on this
third rationale see especially Bishop and Davis, 2001; also Dredge, 2006).

Researchers have further established a clear link between the communicative planning
model, MGM processes, and evolving regulatory frameworks. For example, Bollens (1992)
observed a convergence focused around collaborative and cooperative approaches in state-led
approaches to influencing MGM. Unfortunately, in many instances this has resulted in loose
voluntary arrangements for MGM which over-emphasize the communicative planning model
(stressing that growth would not be managed without consensus) in large part due to
insufficient political will to undertake deeper institutional and/or legislative reform (see, for
example, Rothblatt, 1994; also Hodge and Robinson, 2001). And, in terms of the outcomes
needed to ensure sustainability, this expedient approach may simply not be enough. A
somewhat novel take on this issue comes from Margerum’s (2002) analysis of the application
of communicative planning to a voluntary growth management process in Queensland,
Australia. The Queensland case is of particular interest because, while the initial process was
voluntary, its outcomes included more structured form of implementation than that achieved
in many American voluntary models. This has suggested some important new parameters for
communicative regionalism, and has influenced my development of analytical criteria (for
the latter, see Chapter 3).

Communicative planning, and its unfolding through communicative regionalism, is also of
interest because of the gap between its anchoring values and actual application in planning
situations. Even advocates of communicative planning and its variations have expressed concern with its improper use, particularly when it takes the form of window dressing for planning exercises whose dialogue components are mainly tokenistic (Healey, 2003). This contention is reconfirmed by my own professional planning experience of fifteen years at both local and senior government levels, where I have seen many planners conflicted between desires to realize good planning outcomes through comprehensive stakeholder dialogue (as advocated in the communicative planning model) and the need to “get things done” in a politically expedient manner (see also McGuirk’s 2001 case study).

2.3 Origins and Key Theorists of Communicative Planning

Depending on which communicative planning theorist one examines, one sees a range of early influences from other disciplines. The common thread is the critical theory and communicative rationality of Jurgen Habermas. Rationality, or knowledge, is a critical anchor for planning, in keeping with Friedmann’s (1987) definition of planning as the application of knowledge to action. Habermas made an important contribution to knowledge by distinguishing between what he called instrument rationality and communicative rationality, with the latter recognizing more experiential forms of knowledge and allowing them to come to light, along with values, through dialogue between individuals and groups (Habermas, 1984; Healey, 1997). In this vein, Habermas claimed that knowledge is socially constructed by individuals and groups holding diverse perspectives, rather than absolute.

Habermas’s project in advancing communicative rationality over the instrumental has been a democratic one, anchored in a desire for egalitarian public debate. It responds to his belief
that scientific and technical knowledge have been misused in ways that privilege the interests of the powerful, in large part because such knowledge is difficult for the non-specialist to debate. Communicative rationality has thus sought to reduce the distortions caused by power and an overemphasis on instrumental knowledge, by allowing for a new form of truth to consensually emerge through dialogue. To reduce these distortions, individual participants undertaking Habermasian dialogue must also take communicative action, by constantly reflecting on their own communication patterns as well as those of others (Huxley, 2000, p. 370). Essentially, communicative action (rather than instrumental action which simply seeks to achieve a tangible goal for the sake of goal achievement) must be the focus of effort (see also p. 56 for further discussion of contrast between the two types of action). And, for truth to prevail in this model, consensus must be the end goal.

Of course, this stress on consensus has both informed, and created much reaction to, communicative planning theory. Interestingly, there has even been some debate about the extent to which Habermas himself believed in the *universal* feasibility of consensus. For example, Hillier’s (2003) reading of Habermas suggests acknowledgement that consensus could fail, even where mutual understanding existed, where:

1. A group could not agree on the terms used to define itself (and what it meant to be part of the group) or
2. Interests were opposed and non-generalizable, requiring negotiations and tradeoffs (rather than true consensus) to resolve (p. 40).
One could argue that most difficult planning problems are, at heart, non-generalizable and will thus always require tradeoffs. This question of consensus will be revisited shortly under Section 2.4 – Critiques.

Within the group of communicative planning theorists, the first to concretely incorporate Habermas’s ideas for communicative rationality was American scholar John Forester (1980, 1985, 1989, and 2001). In addition to communicative rationality, Forester’s work was influenced by John Dewey’s ideas on deliberation—a link he shared with Hoch (1994), who was another communicative theorist, and with Friedmann (specifically acknowledged in 1973, 1987,) as well as Argyris and Schon (1974); and Schon (1983). Friedmann, Argyris and Schon were arguably not in the communicative camp despite a common belief in the value of deliberation. Dewey’s contribution to planning theory included the notion that people learn while doing, and the importance of assessing ideas and techniques on the basis of their outcomes, rather than just their intentions (Sandercock, 2003, p. 62).

Forester’s work (e.g. 1985, 1989, 2001) did not simply take Habermasian ideas about dialogue and fuse them onto existing planning models; rather, it thoughtfully translated the notion of ideal dialogue into the less than perfect setting of real world deliberation over planning questions. In this vein, Forester recognized that powerful interests would consistently create situations where misinformation strongly shaped public dialogue. At the same time, he saw that planners were not passive participants in this process. They were power holders in their own right, with the ability to exercise this power (and to correct misinformation where feasible and necessary) by attention-shaping (1980). He later
elaborated that this entailed three distinct processes: some types of decision-making; agenda-setting; and the shaping of felt needs (1989).

In fact, Forester underscored how much of planners’ power (in the sense of influencing outcomes) centres on their significant control over the commodity of information. He also believed that their power would inspire the expectations or judgements about that information because of their formal status as professionals and, frequently, representatives of the state (1980). This appreciation for planners’ power was not just an analytical judgement, but a normative call for planners to use their power for progressive, transformative ends—to enhance social justice in small and subtle ways. In order to do so, Forester believed that planners should actively consider the moral, ethical and political issues shaping their roles, and the exercise of those roles (1980, 1989, and 2001). To facilitate this exploration, Forester’s more recent book, The Deliberative Practitioner (2001) has drawn from extensive planner interviews, and has strategically clustered excerpts from those interviews into a loose storyline that highlights particular questions and themes. This approach has sought to make a practical link between abstract questions and the processing of real world events by individual planners. This technique was innovative, and did help to ground theoretical notions about planners and their participation in public deliberation. Yet, without the context of specific places and other stakeholders, this grounding remained somewhat thin. (Key aspects of Forester’s work, as compared with other communicative theorists of relevance to communicative regionalism, are summarized later in Table 2.1.)
Another major theorist in the communicative camp includes Patsy Healey, a British scholar who had worked for many years as a practicing planner before turning to academic life. As with Forester, Healey helped to thoughtfully translate Habermasian notions of communicative rationality into planning settings; and she drew from Habermas the notion of mutual culture building of diverse actors (Healy, 1997), which she would develop further in later works (Coaffee and Healey, 2003). For Healey, Habermas’s work clearly reunited both facts and values in public discussions (she called this merged form of knowledge practical reasoning). But Healey was also influenced by the work of sociologist Anthony Giddens. She distinguished her work (from that of others who had not incorporated Giddens’s ideas) by referring to her own as collaborative planning. Notable influences from Giddens’s work on collaborative planning theory were his:

- Appreciation of how existing social context with its connections and constraints can both limit and shape our actions and perceptions; and
- Recognition of power not just as an oppressive force needing to be countered, but as a potentially positive force which could also help realize goals and dreams (Giddens, 1984).

Related to the potentially positive view of power, Giddens also observed that power is channelled through allocative resources (e.g. materials, money, and infrastructure) and authoritative resources (derived from the status, role, knowledge, and/or authority held by an individual or agency) (ibid.).

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14 She also acknowledges Forester’s work as an influence (1992, 1997).
Healey elaborated on Giddens’s work by identifying specific relationship systems through which mutual understanding (and mutual capacity for structural change) might be enhanced. Like Forester, and Habermas himself, Healey has used her work to emphasize the use of deliberation for progressive ends. One of Healey’s important contributions in this regard was to celebrate the benefit of, and power inherent in, the public realm. For, while acquainted with the limits to modernist (or universalistic) conceptions of knowledge, Healey still saw value in some sort of shared understanding and agreement between society’s diverse groups. And it was the latter understanding and agreement which was to bolster a shared public realm.

Of particular relevance to my interest in communicative regionalism, Healey also explored ways of translating these theoretical concepts into new approaches to governance. In this regard, her work in the late 1990s and early 21st c. (both alone and with collaborators) is of interest. Healey’s key ideas in this regard have included:

- The value of strategies as simplified reference points for moving forward with action, reflecting earlier shared agreements between stakeholders about desired short, medium and long term ends and the broad approach for achieving goals and/or solving problems (1997);
- The real possibility that stakeholders’ connections to those strategies will shift and weaken over time—a notion she labels interpretive drift (1997); and
- The need for any institutional change (which might be needed to achieve such strategies, or to respond to other externally imposed changes) to progress through
three distinct phases. The first is an initial phase of episodic and individual manifestations of a desired new way of working and acting; the second is a deeper acceptance of that change, in which networks and coalitions (either within an organization or among a group of organizations) make significant changes to standard practices and routines; and the third is a phase of maturity in which the entire culture of an organization or network has accepted and completely internalized the new way of being (Coaffee and Healey, 2003).

These notions are particularly relevant to my analysis, because they point towards variables to which communicative regionalism –and post-communicative regionalism—must pay further attention. They will be considered further throughout the regional case study and its sub cases (see Table 2.1 for a comparative summary with other theorists).

A third communicative theorist worth singling out is Judith Innes, partly because her work has made an even more direct link between theory and practice than that of Forester and Healey, and partly because her work was cited as an overt influence on senior government legislation from my case study in the mid-1990s. In earlier versions of Innes’s work, she clearly affiliated her own approach to theory and practice with a Habermasian influence, labelling it communicative planning (1992 and 1998; also Innes and Booher, 1999). In later works, however, she has distinguished between the specific approach of consensus planning and communicative planning, with the former intended to refer to a more specific subset of processes, and the latter a broader and more variable approach (Innes and Booher, 1999). She has also been more inclined in recent years to call her approach collaborative. Perhaps
in doing so she is clarifying or strengthening an affinity with Healey’s work; however, this is not explicit and has not been confirmed. Innes’s work has drawn substantially on case study analyses of various planning processes—most notably, but not exclusively, occurring in California.

In many of these processes, Innes has participated as a facilitator. Her expression of communicative planning theory is thus grounded in her own hands-on experience, bringing a fresh perspective to theoretical discussions. Moreover, because it is situated in a specific political and institutional context, she avoids a critique launched at Forester’s work and Healey’s 1997 work—at least somewhat. Finally, Innes’s relatively high-profile, hands-on approach has likely given her some credibility among practitioners, who have been exposed to her work largely through the *Journal of the American Planning Association* (JAPA). While the latter adheres to scholarly standards, its approach to topic selection makes it widely read by practitioners, in comparison to other academic journals. In this respect, planners’ exposure to Innes’s work—at least in North America—may have been greater thus far than their exposure to Healey’s and Forester’s. Since 1992 she has published eight pieces (alone or with collaborators) in that journal. In contrast, Healey has only published twice in JAPA over that time period, and Forester only twice (Proquest Database, 2009). Given that North American practitioners are thus more likely to have been exposed to Innes’s work (via JAPA) in recent years, one might reasonably presume that it has also had the most direct impact on North American practice.

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15 Of course, there is reason to believe that there has been some cross-fertilization between the three theorists to some degree. For example, in Healey’s 1992 piece she thanked both Innes and Forester for their comments and support.
Two key themes in Innes’s work which will be discussed here include: the role of communicative planning in stakeholder empowerment (both within the planning process and extending into the future); and the role of the planner as an informative facilitator.

**Stakeholder Empowerment**

Innes shares the democratic aims of her fellow communicative planning theorists; and in addition to calling for processes which allow for equality among (and thus equal input by) stakeholders, she draws attention to the potential of communicative planning processes to provide for stakeholder empowerment long after their conclusion (1992; see also Booher and Innes, 2002; and Connick and Innes, 2003). This emphasis began in works that preceded Healey’s *Collaborative Planning* (1997); nonetheless, it is arguably compatible with Healey’s 1997 (and later) ideas around the benefits of mutual culture building among diverse actors, which can in turn create new *repertoires for action*.

Innes describes the California Environmental Impact Assessment requirement for public deliberation in assessing major development proposals as an example of process creating such repertoires for stakeholders (1992). This is because the deliberation requirement “has made it normal and expected for Californians to consider the environmental dimensions of all projects… [making] environmental issues [consistently]… much more salient in decisions” (*ibid.*, p. 56). This suggests that modes and procedures are coalescing around institutionalized forms of deliberation; and in the process, this enhances stakeholder abilities to contribute to decisions. For, once stakeholders appreciate the regularity around how certain issues are considered, and they understand the rules of the game, they can be more
effective in raising their own concerns than in a situation where the rules and procedures for dialogue are uncertain. This notion of action repertoires, effectively recognized by both Innes and Healey, is an important theme in the Greater Vancouver case study, where it will be illustrated in more concrete terms.

**Planner as Informative Facilitator**

As with Forester, Innes has devoted much energy to exploring the value of information, and the ways in which it is used to shape deliberative processes. Of particular interest is how she links information provision to the role of the planner, and then popularizes this notion, along with ideas from Forester and Healey. Key points in this regard include Innes’s emphasis on:

- The need to link information with practical action and the problem’s context, particularly where information is technical / scientific and less accessible (1998);
- The value of information in enabling innovative, as opposed to routine and mechanistic solutions, to complex problems in the context of consensus-oriented planning processes (Innes and Booher, 1999, drawn in part from their reading of complexity theory and also reinforced more broadly by DeRoo, 2001);
- The importance of careful planner attention to, and participation in, the design of communicative processes, including the ability to bring specific experts (technical and political) to round out perspectives at the discussion table (1998);
- Expectations that good planners will act to counter misinformation (Innes and Gruber, 1995; also shared with Forester, 1989, Chapter Four);
• The role of planners in shaping information flow, both in between actual discussion points, and at other critical milestones in the deliberative process (1998; again shared with Forester, *ibid.*)—a task which effectively prioritizes information, and potentially the truth resulting from its exchange (McGuirk, 2001); and

• The potential (but not necessarily a requirement) for planners to also play more overt mediation / facilitation roles in dialogue (1998, p. 59)–but see Section 2.4 for Huxley’s more critical perspective on the performance of this role in practice.

Innes’s work has continued to help reshape communicative theory in recent years, with her insights from actual cases, and with new ideas from other social theories including network and complexity theory\(^\text{16}\) (Innes and Booher, 1999; Booher and Innes, 2000). However, as some of her own case work shows\(^\text{17}\), some of these ideas continue to face several challenges in practical settings.

\(^\text{16}\) While complexity theory has its roots in physics, it has increasingly been adapted for social sciences research.
\(^\text{17}\) e.g. her 2005 study with Gruber of a San Francisco Metropolitan Planning Organization, discussed further in Section 2.2
### Table 2.1 Key Theorists and Relevance to Communicative Regionalism

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Major Theoretical Influences</th>
<th>Forester</th>
<th>Healey</th>
<th>Innes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Habermas and Dewey</td>
<td>Habermas, Giddens, and Forester</td>
<td>Habermas and Forester; later, complexity theory and network theory</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interviews with practicing planners</td>
<td>Earlier experiences as a practitioner, and some observational research of planning processes</td>
<td>Case studies –some from secondary material and interviews, but many from own role as facilitator</td>
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### Relevant Ideas for Communicative Regionalism

- **Forester**
  - Complexity best addressed through multi-stakeholder dialogue
  - Planning processes benefit where there are opportunities for learning while doing.
  - Power always distorts ideal dialogue, so planners must correct distortions for progressive ends (information),
  - Planners set agendas for dialogue and shape felt needs (manipulation), but
  - counter the dangers of manipulation through respect for all stakeholders’ aims and interests.

- **Healey**
  - Actions and perspectives are constrained and shaped by social setting (structure)
  - Relationships and overlapping multiple identities help make pockets of shared meaning and values (culture)
  - Strategies are shorthand for agreements, and can weaken over time
  - Institutions and networks change core ideas in distinct phases, culminating in a shared culture and repertoire for action.

- **Innes**
  - Stakeholders are empowered long after communicative processes end (alternative way of expressing Healey’s notion of repertoires for action)
  - Planners play key roles in designing communicative processes and identifying participants (practice-based, case-specific expressions of Forester’s agenda-setting notion)
  - Planners coordinate and orchestrate information flows (practice-based, case-specific expressions of Forester’s notions)

*Source: Summarized by author from literature described in Section 2.3 above.*
2.4 Major Critiques of Communicative Planning

Connection to Modernism

Notwithstanding its substantial profile, communicative planning theory has borne the brunt of many critiques. From a theoretical perspective, perhaps one of the greatest critiques lies with communicative theory’s connection to modernism. Several scholars claim that, by maintaining such ties, communicative planning theory cannot truly be considered “the” dominant planning paradigm, because it is not a sufficient departure from modernism (Huxley and Yiftachel, 2000; see also Premfors, 1993, with regard to Habermasian theory in general). Moreover, it is still used less frequently in practice than other more explicitly modernist paradigms like the rational-comprehensive model. Allmendinger and Tewdwr-Jones (2002) temper this critique somewhat, suggesting instead that, while communicative planning may not be truly dominant in practice, it remains the strongest contemporary theoretical paradigm (particularly if one is open to different interpretations of what is meant by the term paradigm).

More specifically, despite its recognition of many different voices and interests at the planning table, communicative theory still takes a somewhat universalist view of how planning theory can be applied (Huxley and Yiftachel, 2000). For, by implying that consensus can and should be sought in all contexts, communicative planning theory is still a grand theory. (Huxley and Yiftachel; see also Premfors, 1993). Other scholars not directly associated with the Communicative School, but somewhat sympathetic with its aims, have suggested remedying this deficit through more selective and context-sensitive applications of
communicative planning theory notions and prescriptions (Sandercock, 2003 and 2004a and 2004b; Alexander, 2001; and Allmendinger, 2002). Yet so far, little advice has been offered as to when and how this selection should occur. One exception exists in the work of DeRoo (2001) which suggests that the returns from using a communicative process (to resolve specific types of environmental issue) increase as problems become more complex –complex in the sense that any given technical solution which one stakeholder might propose has undesired outcomes of large magnitude for one or more other stakeholders, which cannot be satisfactorily mitigated. In some cases, DeRoo argues that regulation may still be the best approach; but some effort to first understand the level of complexity in a given situation will be important. Yet DeRoo’s advice in this regard still remains broad, and needs further consideration in a growth management context.

In a related vein, communicative theory fails to sufficiently consider the unique, contingent nature of place (Harvey, 1996 in Huxley and Yiftachel; see also Fainstein, 2007 and Dorcey, forthcoming, p. 12). Thus, the micro-studies which have informed the development of communicative planning theory have tended to reflect a superficial understanding of the place-specific conditions which might create opportunities and barriers for the unfolding of consensus-based processes, for example, irrespective of complexities posed by scale, power channels, and participant skill levels (Huxley and Yiftachel, 2000; see also Dredge, 2006).
Work by Innes and Gruber (2005) addresses the latter critique by:

- Including more detail on some of the obstacles they faced in promoting a truly collaborative approach in the context of regional transportation planning in San Francisco; and

- Identifying different planning styles (e.g. technocratic, political influence, and social activist) which may be dominant in certain contexts and, through their dominance, create more barriers than opportunities for communicative planning.

Yet Innes and Gruber still give no suggestions on how to counter barriers posed by alternate styles. Moreover, they do not sufficiently consider the larger implications for communicative theory, as currently expressed, and posed by the practice of such “rival” planning styles. For example, if the dominance of technocratic planning styles is impeding communicative planning, what makes the continuation of the technocratic mode so appealing? To build on a question often asked by Flyvbjerg (2004): who gains and who loses from using a “rival” style as opposed to a communicative planning process? Furthermore, their piece does not address the inherent conflict between the special status associated with being a planning professional (in transportation or any specialty) and the communicative emphasis on more egalitarian relationships between planners and non-planners, which diminishes planners’ status. (In essence, such diminishment may be one of the things that technocratic planners stand to lose.) More work is thus needed to respond to this critique.
Problematic Treatment of Power

A second critical theme is the treatment of power in communicative theory. A significant problem in this regard is a failure to understand why and how stakeholders decide to distort the truth in dialogue. With greater awareness of what various actors have to lose from communicative rationality (the “why” part of the equation), processes could be designed which at best acknowledge such potential losses but at the very least would take a more realistic view of how certain kinds of interests are likely to react in a dialogue setting. (While Forester (1987), began some of this work, without a grounding in a specific place and time, important nuances are missed.) And, by learning from Foucault’s theories about power (see Flyvbjerg, 1998 and 2000; also Richardson, 1996 for further discussion), one can better understand how the distortions are likely to be manifest.

Foucault’s theories underscore the capillary nature of power. Rather than being imposed directly, power is far more likely to trickle down through various agents, each of whom engages with and shapes the way it is channelled down the line. Richardson (1996) and Flyvbjerg (1998) argue that planners and planning theorists must have a better understanding of this channelling process to be effective.

One illustration of how such channelling occurs is manifest when a developer, fearing negative publicity, chooses to abstain from a planning process aimed at creating a redevelopment vision for a given neighbourhood. Given the capillary nature of power, this absence from direct participation does not necessarily mean an absence of influence. For example, if a developer has made agreements with various residents in that neighbourhood to
purchase relatively underutilized parcels (subject to density increases for them being realised through the plan) those homeowners will end up representing the developer’s interests in deliberations (as conduits in the transmission of power). Of course, in making such representation, the homeowners will also add their own perspectives on, and interests in, such matters. (Perhaps they will seek to further influence the plan in ways which do not benefit the developer, but do provide the homeowners with satisfaction, such as lobbying for a less desired land use next to the property of another neighbour whose teenager has thrown too many loud parties in the past.) In the process of developing and implementing MGM plans, with a larger number of interests, including multiple government agencies as well as business and community groups, the potential for indirect and hidden interests to exert themselves in complex ways becomes infinitely more complex.

A frequent reply to the power critique from communicative planning theorists is that good planners can help counter the distorting (negative) impacts of power in dialogue; and in exposing power in this manner, political pressure from other stakeholders will keep such power in check (Innes, 1995; Healey, 1997; Innes and Booher, 1999). Yet this response tends to assume away the problems of power, rather than trying to understand them in a more nuanced and constructive manner (McGuirk, 2001; Hillier, 2003; and Murray, 2006). While Booher and Innes (2002) suggest that more conscious network development could be a means of countering the distorting impacts of power in a deliberative process, it is also possible for networks to be used to disrupt communication, as demonstrated in Dredge’s 2006 case study of tourism planning in Queensland, Australia. Moreover, with more specific regard to the problem of sorting out how power is exerted, this assumption fails to
acknowledge the difficulties that planners face—particularly those employed by the state—in acting to remedy such distortions, which can often be perpetuated by the political masters they serve (Huxley, 2000).

The capillary nature of power raises another important issue related to the communicative planning ideal of consensus. Forester, Healey and Innes all acknowledge at some point in their work that true consensus may not be possible, consistent with Hillier’s (2003) reading of Habermas (1984). Yet often the goal of consensus, by virtue of unarticulated power dynamics playing out, creates pressure on participants in a deliberation to suppress their interests and either reduce the expression of conflict without resolving the real problems which created it and/or absent themselves from dialogue (Lukes, 1974 in Richardson; Bramwell, 2004; see also Brand and Gaffikin, 2007 for an empirical example of this occurring in Northern Ireland). In implicit acknowledgement of these and other concerns, some authors like Dorcey (forthcoming) call for a third wave of innovation in citizen and multistakeholder involvement processes.

Related to this potential for suppression is the potential for certain types of information, to which planners may have (or may potentially have) greater access than some of the other stakeholders, to be downplayed. If planners as employees of the state are trying to facilitate a process and bring forward technical information which inconveniences a particular stakeholder at the same time (or even to represent the views of an absent stakeholder) their facilitation role becomes suspect. Suspicion caused in this manner will either inhibit
dialogue by non-staff participants, or could censor the planner (either through self-censoring or as imposed by his/her political masters).

One example may occur where a planner tries to provide information on local housing affordability concerns in a neighbourhood resistant to the inclusion of even modest density increases to enhance housing choice. In an attempt to introduce a perspective which is absent from the discussions (e.g. the first-time home-buyer), the planner may convey information on the average annual incomes required to purchase new homes in that neighbourhood, and on the reduced likelihood of two working parents (with various occupations held by current neighbourhood residents) earning incomes which could sustain mortgage payments for such purchases. Rather than debating the information, stakeholders may accuse the planner of being “non-objective”, threatening to raise the matter with the planner’s political masters who will, at the very least, chastise the planner for her or his lack of “objectivity”; and who may go so far as to side with the residents who do not wish to see any changes in local housing stock. The latter scenario helps illustrate the ways in which both conflicts in facilitation and specific power dynamics can impact the ability to bring forward information which is directly relevant in a given planning scenario.

Another problem with the communicative school’s treatment of power is its emphasis on the negative side, and corresponding focus on removing the negative effects, of power (Richardson, 1996). This emphasis in turn creates a certain blindness to factors needed to enable tangible actions in support of goals. The latter critique has been most strongly launched by a group of theorists often labelled Foucauldian, given their reliance on Michel
Foucault’s sociological theories of power (e.g. Flyvbjerg, 1998 and 2000; Richardson 1996). But the critique also resonates with Giddens’s notion that power is required to enable action (1984) and Friedmann’s (2004) definition of planning as the application of knowledge to action. An overemphasis on power’s downside thus creates a gap with significant implications for outcomes. For example, infrastructure investments flowing from what Giddens calls *allocative power* (power based on the ability to allocate resources) are essential in shaping metropolitan growth patterns. By failing to fully understand this form of allocative power, including the mechanisms and processes used to channel it, one risks losing an opportunity to influence a key lever in MGM outcomes. Healey (1997) recognizes this potential, and her work in this regard is more nuanced than that of Forester or Innes; still, her work could also benefit from greater elaboration on this topic in future. Conversely, there are other planning theorists from outside both Communicative and Foucauldian planning analysis approaches who recognize the positive aspects of power, and who encourage planners to find ways of more effectively channelling it for positive (i.e., transformative) ends (e.g. Friedmann, 1987; 1990; 1998; 2002; and Baum, 1987 and 1996).

**Unexamined Preference for Deliberative Over Representative Forms of Democracy**

Beyond the power question, a third theme of critique relates to communicative planning theory’s preference for deliberative democracy over representative democracy—and the corresponding assumption that somehow land use planning processes rooted in the former can and should subvert the latter. Such an assumption is overly simplistic. It has been
argued, for example, that for deliberative conversations to be productive, they must occur between a very small number of people. This in turn raises questions of legitimacy, such as who gets to participate, how do they participate (i.e., by what rules must they abide) and what makes their perspective better than that of another individual? (see Parkinson, 2003 for further discussion). Conversely, representative democracy allows for a type of averaging out of perspectives, with a clearer (if still imperfect) base of legitimacy. This is not to say that deliberative democracy lacks future potential; but the legitimacy issue (and the relative advantages of deliberative versus representative democracy) are by no means settled.

**Insufficient Appraisal of Instrumental Action**

A fourth theme in critiques of communicative planning which cross-cuts issues of both power and direct versus representative democracy is the issue of action. According to Huxley (2000), communicative action seeks to understand the perspectives of other actors in the dialogue process. It thus differs significantly from instrumental action, which addresses issues through technical and strategic means. Such means often (but not always) involving winning or gaining an advantage over another actor whose interests are different from one’s own (ibid.). As Huxley thus observes, communicative action “is fundamentally qualitatively different from negotiations around interest positions and consequent strategic actions” (ibid., p. 370). Communicative action is not necessarily problematic *per se*, but it is if it causes an imbalance in the level of effort and appreciation for instrumental action.
The potential for problems in overemphasizing communicative over instrumental action include the matter of time and resource constraints, which are instrumental problems. Time and resource constraints may prevent organizations from taking a more deliberative approach to solving planning questions. Such insensitivity may create a vicious cycle, with further resistance to dialogue rationalized by time and resource constraints.

Time and resource constraints are even more acute when instability is present; for the latter may create new blockages to organizational or network channels for accessing the resources needed to enable extensive stakeholder dialogue. As an example of this which will be discussed in greater detail in the case study (Chapter 5) lies with the elimination of regional planning powers by a senior level of government – a step which was influenced (and justified) by conditions of economic instability. Besides eliminating the authoritative (i.e., legal) resources which would make regional planning efforts (and related stakeholders) credible, the step also effectively rendered illegitimate the use of any existing resources the regional planning agency might draw upon to develop any new plans (even plans which were only voluntary and without legal status.)

Another facet of the action-related weaknesses of communicative rationality (i.e., the insufficient attention to instrumental action) is the matter of timing (as distinct from time as a finite commodity) in achieving needed outcomes. The notion of timing as I use it here has two dimensions – a political dimension and a project management dimension.
The political timing dimension presumes that tasks which are needed to achieve a desired outcome (outcome-supportive actions) might be easier or more difficult depending on the other events and short term perceptions in play at a given moment in time. Those events and beliefs may create a limited window of opportunity in which a given project or task might successfully advance, because the events and perceptions might create blockages, or because there is a need to navigate around other actions which may conflict with outcome-supportive actions.

The political timing dimension has been studied at length from outside the planning discipline (e.g. Curry and Wade, 1968; Wiberg, 1993; Zhu, 1993; Gibson, 1999; and Kim et al., 2008). Among the factors affecting this dimension, Gibson suggests three of particular salience: a) the cognitive and memory-based processes which impact constituents’ perceptions of the politicians who serve them; b) the relative importance and grouping of good and bad political news items conveyed in the media; and c) the nature of the media channels themselves. Gibson’s consideration of these factors has led him to formulate, and to tentatively confirm with evidence, several hypotheses regarding politicians’ behaviour. Three of interest include highlighting, phasing and packaging. The practice of highlighting occurs where politicians try to time the release of good news and bad news so that good news items reach the media in moments (and in ways) which will garner significant profile for the positive, and low profile for the negative. Phasing refers to the practice of trying to release

18 Drawn from three very different case studies.
more good news items closer to election campaigns. Finally, packaging entails bunching up the bad news stories and events so that they all happen closer together.\textsuperscript{19}

The project management dimension of timing is directly outcome-oriented, and has its origins in the notion of the \textit{critical path}. Critical path theory was developed initially in the 1950s as an industrial production tool (see Buffa, 1969) and was later adapted for broader project management purposes (e.g. Lockyer and Gordon, 1991). Among other things, charting out a critical path requires that actors recognize the interdependence of a range of tasks, and that they appreciate the many conditions in which a given task cannot start until one or more “critical path” events have taken place, if they hope to achieve project success and avoid failure. Scholars today recognize that the interrelationships between tasks are even more complex than critical path theory alone can describe. This is because failures or delays in one event along a given project timeline can have unpredicted consequences. Given the potential for information suppression to occur\textsuperscript{20}, a communicative dialogue process may not provide opportunities to sufficiently consider these task interdependencies.

\textbf{Conclusion}

This chapter has reviewed the notion of communicative rationality as an important type of process theory relevant to MGM. It has examined the work of three major communicative

\textsuperscript{19} The latter practice is confirmed by Linton’s (1982) research, which found that both memory recall and the strength of emotion evoked by a particular memory diminish the more time has passed. It is further confirmed by Gibson’s own interpretation of prospect theory research, which suggests that the value to individuals of positive events tends to diminish as more and more good things happen, and that reactions to negative events also tend to grow proportionately smaller as the bad news grows.

\textsuperscript{20} Even though this suppression is not desired by communicative planning theory.
planning theorists whose work has set the foundation for the practice I have labelled communicative regionalism. The aims of communicative rationality have been democratic, and have sought to promote dialogue between divergent interests with the goal of seeking consensus. The use of communicative-based planning approaches has become popular in practice, partly because of these democratic values, but also partly because such approaches can be used to justify government downsizing and reduced bureaucracies. The work of Forester, Healey and Innes has sought to more consistently frame how communicative rationality might be effectively woven into planning theory and practice. Of particular value in this regard is their appreciation of the need for alternatives to rational-comprehensive syntheses of information, which are less suited for increasingly complex problems. The specific provisions of communicative planning theory will be used in developing the six indicators of communicative planning theory (Chapter 3, Table 3.1) used in my analysis. Conversely, there are also several weaknesses in communicative planning theory (and thus communicative regionalism), identified largely by scholars outside the communicative planning school. These weaknesses will also be examined throughout the case study, using the lens provided by the ANT research dimension of my methodology (discussed in Chapter 3), which focuses in more detail on the relationships between actors by asking four additional questions (Table 3.2).

At the same time, however, notions surrounding dialogue and consensus have been adapted by practitioners in ways which may have made the critiques of this type of planning theory (particularly those focused on its insufficient appreciation of power dynamics in deliberation) readily apparent. Such weaknesses do not nullify the many good ideas inherent in
communicative planning theory; but they underscore a need for additional concerted, case-grounded research which is capable both of shedding more light on power dynamics and of pointing the way toward new approaches to planning theory. The need to find ways of understanding when, how, and why communicative planning theory (and communicative regionalism) may be less effective in informing outcomes has prompted my use of the ANT research dimension cited above.

Using the understanding of communicative planning theory, and its broad implications for communicative regionalism thus far generated in this chapter, will serve as a point of departure for the more detailed examination of communicative regionalism to be provided in this case study.
Chapter 3 - Research Methodology and Methods

If there are inherent problems with communicative regionalism, and if Vancouver is an ideal case for explaining them, how does this dissertation aim to shed light on them? The purpose of this chapter is to elaborate on my research methodology. By grounding my exploration of communicative regionalism as a case study in a specific region, I hope to add value by exploring issues relating to planning theory and practice in a specific setting, (Creswell, 1998, pp. 36-37). Of particular benefit in the case study approach is its mixed nature. A case study is really an umbrella term, under which a variety of other methods (including quantitative if desired) can be combined, in ways that best suit the research focus. This hybrid quality is particularly appropriate in planning research, where there is significant variety and differences in focus among the various data sources available (see Gaber and Gaber, 1997 for illustration). Case studies thus lend themselves well to triangulation, or the improved accuracy of analysis by examining different data sets relating to the same event (Jick, 1979, p. 602). Triangulation can also provide for a more integrated view of a particular situation or event (ibid., p. 603).

While case studies were once regarded in the past as only having value in formulating a hypothesis, which must then be tested through other means, there are other solid reasons for conducting a case study. First, a case study celebrates the value of context-grounded knowledge; and this is in fact highly relevant to the study of social processes, including the interplay of internal actors, structural conditions, and external forces affecting metropolitan planning. Stake has described this type of knowledge creation not as generating a new understanding of reality “but [a] refinement of understanding” (1995, p. 7). Flyvbjerg (2004)
elaborates, arguing that social knowledge is more a type of expertise than the type of knowledge produced through natural science research. Expertise is rooted in deep familiarity with large numbers of cases, each anchored in its own specific context. Case study research thus helps to add to a body of expertise which, especially in professional endeavours, will “allow people to develop from rule-based beginners [lacking such depth] to virtuoso experts” (ibid., p. 421). This has been described elsewhere by Stake and Trumbull (1982) as the development of naturalistic generalizations, or “conclusions arrived at through personal engagement in life’s affairs or by vicarious experience so well constructed that the person feels as if it happened to themselves” (p. 85 in Stake).

Second, a single case study can enable researchers to falsify one or more dominant hypotheses. Flyvbjerg (2001, 2004) explains how this occurs by citing Karl Popper’s notion that the observation of a single black swan nullifies the theory that all swans are white. The appropriate selection of a single case can lead to generalizable and theory-enhancing results if it produces a black swan, or disproves an existing theory (whether that theory is formal or tacit). For by providing a more detailed and complex look at a given situation, a case study can be a particularly fruitful detector of black swans which, prior to the case study, may have been obscured by a large volume of white swans.

In examining the outcomes of three nodes in a single region characterised by its communicative MGM planning approaches, my research has the potential to confirm the sighting of a “black swan”, i.e., to falsify an implicit assumption that the practice of communicative regionalism must lead to positive outcomes. The research takes as a starting
point the hypothesis that communicative regionalism may produce problematic MGM outcomes. In other words, it suggests that the Greater Vancouver case may be a “black swan” for communicative regionalism – at least in terms of goals for employment concentration. It also presumes (and then tests and confirms) a belief that communicative regionalism has been practiced in the case study region of Greater Vancouver for over thirty years, albeit with fluctuations and shifts.

In arguing that communicative regionalism may have been problematic, the dissertation does not label Greater Vancouver planning a failure. Rather, the work takes a more critical look at the factors that actually produced Greater Vancouver’s present-day outcomes, which included both positive and negative results. The work recognizes that any concerted planning efforts will always yield a combination of successes and unmet hopes. Even more importantly, however, this same examination, and explication, of dynamics in the case study region may also help add to the base of expertise for regional practitioners seeking more transformative (socially and environmentally progressive) outcomes for their work.

A final, important, feature of case study research is its frequent use of a guiding framework to help analyze a complex situation (Yin, 2003, p. 49 cited in Jacelon and O’Dell, 2005). In this regard, my research approach consists of three dimensions.

### 3.1 Three Dimensions of the Methodology

A key analytical dimension of my research assesses communicative regionalism on its own terms, evaluating the extent to which it has been present in Greater Vancouver in various
MGM planning phases. MGM plans, reports, and other materials describing planning processes will be examined in terms of their performance on six potential indicators of communicative regionalism approaches. If communicative regionalism occurs where there is a dialogue-based approach to land use planning, and an emphasis on communicative action, it is important to ensure that an assessment of communicative regionalism occurs where such approaches have substantially occurred. While these indicators or criteria are described below, their initial testing or calibration is described in Chapter 4 (against plans from two other regions). Their analytical application will occur largely in the discussion of the regional scale activities in Chapter 5. Nonetheless, I will also make reference to these criteria throughout the case study and, of course, in the concluding chapter.

My rationale for applying these six indicators primarily to the regional scale activities, with less emphasis on their application in the discussion of nodal development (Metrotown, Big Bend and Discovery Place) is as follows. First, my research interest is in examining the relevance and effect of communicative-scale processes at the regional scale, rather than municipal or neighbourhood scales (even while critical events are happening at the latter). Applying this first research dimension particularly in understanding the development of the regional-scale plans allows me primarily to test for the presence of communicative regionalism in the case region analyzed. If it is not substantially present in the region studied, a critical examination of the outcome implications of communicative regionalism becomes irrelevant.
Second, notwithstanding their importance in unpacking regional planning work, the indicators become less applicable (although not completely irrelevant) to examining regional plan implementation via employment node development in Metrotown, Big Bend, and Discovery Place. Why is this the case? As noted in Chapter 2, the literature which critiques communicative planning theory (which directly informs communicative regionalism) has flagged four broad problem areas, including its: presumption of universal applicability; problematic understanding and treatment of power; unexamined faith in deliberative democracy; and insufficient appraisal of instrumental action. These critiques effectively hint at the reasons for which outcomes from the application of communicative regionalism may not meet expectations. While the application of the six communicative regionalism indicators might demonstrate whether or not communicative regionalism was practiced in the development of the three nodes, they do not tell us enough about those instances where either the principles of communicative regionalism were ignored, or whether the weaknesses of communicative regionalism were being shored up by savvy actors taking instrumental actions intuitively formulated to compensate in support of better outcomes. The nodal case studies, which are designed to shed light on the outcomes produced by communicative regionalism, must then be examined in a way which allows those instrumental actions to come to light. Such examination requires a second research methodology dimension (Actor Network Theory) which will be discussed further in a later subsection.

**Indicators of Communicative Regionalism**

Shelving the weaknesses of communicative planning for the moment, what are the indicators and how were they derived? Each of the six indicators of communicative regionalism used
has been informed by my reading of the literature on communicative planning theory (see Chapter 3). It has also been influenced by Margerum’s (2002) criteria for evaluating the collaborative process, which he has also applied to a growth management case study. It has been further refined from calibration against two test examples (described in Chapter 4). These indicators and their significance are summarized in Table 3.1, following the more detailed explanation below.

Indicator #1 consists of the information base provided, and is relevant in light of communicative planning theory’s base in Habermasian critical theory, which stresses rational dialogue (including information exchange) as the way to the truth and a means of reducing power imbalances. The value of planning information in this regard has been discussed at length by Innes, 1998; (see also Forester, 1980, 1989 and 2001; and embodied in Margerum’s 2002 criteria #4 and #6). To the extent that a document’s creation involved the thorough exchange of multiple types of information between stakeholders; and to the extent that the exchange promoted a sense of shared task and/or purpose, the document being evaluated is deemed to have met this criterion.

Indicator #2 considers the extent to which the role of the planner was conceived as that of a facilitator of said information exchange. This is related to the degree to which planners’ work has revolved around enabling information exchange, relative to the prescription of goals and strategies; it also depends on planners’ efforts to help keep the dialogue and deliberation process moving (Innes, 1998, p. 59) and to set process ground rules (see also Margerum’s third and fifth criteria). Indicator #3 assesses the extent to which stakeholder
involvement in plan development was promoted and enabled –this can be assessed in terms of public meetings, the range of stakeholders invited, and opportunities for comment and discussion (condensing Margerum’s first two criteria). Indicator #4 considers the extent of stakeholder involvement in plan implementation –that is, in the translation of agreed goals into concrete actions and on-the-ground outcomes, through the creation of repertoires for action. Indicator #4 is not addressed directly in Margerum’s criteria, although it is hinted at in his analysis as a valuable consideration. Implementation is of particular importance in the arena of MGM policy for, as Pendall and Martin state, “the impact of urban containment policy depends not so much on the nature of the policy itself but on its implementation” (2002, p. 29).

Indicator #5 considers the extent to which a communicative planning exercise in a region may have been created (or at least hold the strong potential for creating) an ongoing shift in that region’s planning culture (see especially Innes, 1992; Healey, 1997; and Coaffee and Healey, 2003). For example, a successfully executed deliberative process may:

- Generate expectations for future consultation, to be shaped by specific ground rules; or
- Produce new sets of commitments for participants, formalized in texts such as contracts, memoranda of understanding, or even new laws.

As shorthand for this phenomenon, I will frequently use Healey’s phrase “repertoires for action”. Again, this indicator is not explicitly considered in Margerum’s criteria.
Finally, Indicator #6 evaluates whether consensus was actively sought as a process goal. This represents a weaker version of Margerum’s criterion #7, which presumes that consensus will actually be reached. My approach follows Hillier’s (2003) observation that Habermas himself did not expect an actual consensus result, even while he encouraged it as a goal for deliberation.

What has become apparent from my application of these criteria in the case study, and should also become apparent to the reader in due course, is that there is a need for communicative regionalism to delve further into expectations for how these criteria are met by different scales of government in the MGM process.
### Table 3.1 Indicators for Assessing Extent of Communicative Regionalism in MGM

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Significance</th>
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| **1 Information Base** | - Information key to constructive dialogue  
- Multiple types of information valued (including non-objective)  
- Open and clear information exchange about issues and stakeholder perspectives suggests a communicative approach  
- Dialogue seen as a critical part of the information base for planning decisions. |
| **2 Role of Planner as Facilitator** | - Extent to which planner (or comparable agent) enables information exchange determines extent to which communicative planning was unfolding  
- Planner seen as key to helping reduce communication distortions caused by power imbalances between stakeholders  
- Planner shapes attention on key transformative issues—in this case, the holistic, environmental quality aims of growth management |
| **3 Stakeholder Involvement in Plan Development** | - Stakeholders would include general public, various interest groups, developers, as well as municipalities of a given metropolitan region  
- Provision of many opportunities for stakeholder dialogue in plan development process suggests a communicative approach  
- Evidence in final plan that stakeholder input has been effectively translated into plan goals |
| **4 Stakeholder Involvement in Plan Implementation** | - Ongoing dialogue and information exchange during plan implementation phase |
| **5 Ongoing Cultural Shifts from Process** | - Evidence that deliberation on regional plans / regional planning matters has yielded, facilitated, or expanded on a transition in the local planning culture. Such evidence could include Healey’s “new repertoires of action” |
| **6 Goal of Consensus** | - Consensus may not emerge from the process, but should at least be a goal from the outset, with evidence of efforts made towards that goal |
As I use the six criteria to examine the case study results, I will be looking specifically for examples of actions which demonstrate the application of communicative regionalism, and whether or not such application was successful. To this end, I will be asking the following two sub-questions, to be answered in the conclusion:

1. Were there episodes in the case study where communicative regionalism was applied for the right reasons (i.e., for democratic purposes and to cope with complexity in ways that would reinforce democratic and transformative values), and it achieved the right results (in terms of furthering the stakeholders’ vision for MGM)? If so why – how did the nature of relationships between actors, the extent of instability, the use of texts, and fluctuating network boundaries influence these events?

2. Were there episodes in the case study where communicative regionalism was applied for the right reasons (i.e., for democratic purposes and to cope with complexity in ways that would reinforce democratic and transformative values), but where it achieved a less than desired result? If so, how did this happen?

I will also be looking at whether there were other episodes during the period studied which constituted modes of acting which represented a non-communicative approach. To this end, I will be asking a third sub-question:

3. Were there significant episodes in the case study where communicative regionalism was not applied, but where significant actions impacting MGM outcomes were taken? If so, what factors shaped these episodes?

**Analytical Questions from Actor Network Theory**

Another dimension of my research approach looks more closely at aspects of relationships between relevant government agencies in the case study which are not sufficiently captured in the dialogical focus of communicative regionalism. This relational dimension, informed
by Actor Network Theory (ANT) is used because it helps compensate for the inherent weaknesses in communicative regionalism (and communicative planning theory) mentioned above and discussed at length in Chapter 2. Questions created to guide the ANT analytical dimension will be used to the greatest extent in evaluating actors’ roles in the planning and development of the three employment nodes in the case study. The questions themselves are listed later in Table 3.2.

More specifically, the ANT dimension of analysis helps focus attention not just on whether or not communicative regionalism was occurring in specific case study episodes, but on:

- some of the relational factors that suggest why it was or was not used; and
- Non-communicative (i.e., instrumental and power-cognizant) action which ultimately shaped outcomes.

The ANT dimension provides for an analysis of actions not just from a communicative or dialogue-based perspective, (how action can and should facilitate discussion) but from both a more socially-connected as well as instrumental perspective: how the actions of one individual or agency can set in motion the actions of one or more other individuals and agencies, and how the originating action is itself constrained and shaped by a broader, but nonetheless fluid, social setting (see Latour, 2007, pp. 43-44). The ANT dimension requires that the analyst pay closer attention to action-oriented documents (rather than stopping at the broad statements of principle which often constitute the bulk of regional plans). In essence, it requires consideration of more localized reports (rather than merely high level plans) and
of interviews with key players which describe actual decisions taken to implement MGM strategies (or not) by:

- creating more detailed guidance plans for specific nodes;
- approving or rejecting development proposals; and
- choosing to invest and/or collaborate with another agency to invest (or to not invest) in infrastructure and lands.

The documents shown in Table 3.3 will be consulted in this part of the analysis.

What makes ANT a useful base for analysis – particularly since it is analytical rather than normative? ANT is useful because it compensates for what I will term the “outcome blindness” of communicative planning theory, or the relative lack of interest in actions which have any other purpose but to facilitate dialogue. ANT enables consideration of more instrumental or result-oriented forms of action without losing sight of the relationships that underscore the role of connections between actors in determining and enabling action. The nature of these connections may be shaped by status differences, but may also be formed in spite of them. Such connections effectively create the very resources for action described by Healey, which can include identities, social mores, laws, codes of practice, and other technologies.

The ANT methodology embodied in this analytical dimension (and the more detailed research questions it has engendered in my dissertation) is particularly interested in how
relationships between actors are localized, even where there is a perception that so-called
global-scale phenomena and actions are shaping events. For understanding the localization
of relationships consists of examining how attachments between actors, regardless of
physical distances separating them, are expressed in tangible objects (which can include
plans and buildings) and in place-specific ways (Latour, 2007, especially pp. 173-190; also p.
238).

How might a building symbolize connections between actors? Beyond the obvious role that
a building plays as a functional location for people to meet and engage with each other, the
building represents a large web of agreements and relationships between individuals and
groups: the developer and the bank that has financed construction; the developer and the
various trades people who worked on the project; and the developer and the building’s
purchasers or tenants. But the building relies on an even deeper, more hidden web of
relationships. It ties into a sewer system whose broader framework may have been initially
funded by taxpayers, and which is maintained by sanitation staff. Such staff in turn may
use maintenance processes which are guided by a set of routines that were informed by a
combination of organizational and local concerns, and scientific / technical knowledge
(perhaps generated in a series of academic institutions) around how to ensure appropriate
flows while keeping the pipes in good condition to avoid premature failure. In short, a
simple object becomes a convergence point for a much larger web or network of actors who
might otherwise have little in common. A plan may also represent a network convergence
point; similarly, the investment in infrastructure to deliver upon plan goals is one—as well as

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21 Even if the local connections are paid for by the developer, the overall system tends to have a broader
publicly funded component.
other goals which may in fact have nothing to do with that plan. But, to the extent that such actions influence a plan, the agency taking them is participating in plan implementation (with positive, negative, or mixed results on outcomes). As a result, I make frequent reference throughout this dissertation to linkages between agencies impacting plan outcomes through a MGM network. For purposes of this research, I define the latter as comprised primarily of various government agencies involved in: setting the legislative framework for MGM planning; MGM planning itself; and MGM plan implementation. Nonetheless, other actors (e.g. developers and citizens) can be, and are, frequently drawn into this network on a more episodic (i.e., temporary) basis.

The local nature of this analysis directly contrasts with modernistic notions of universality which, according to some critics (e.g. Huxley and Yiftachel, 2000; see also Chapter Two) mars communicative planning theory. Given that an important critique of communicative planning theory rests with its strong link to modernism, and its universalizing arguments in support of dialogical consensus, localization may provide a valuable counterbalance.

To capture this localization concern, and ultimately focus on MGM outcomes, my four detailed questions for analyzing inter-agency relationships draw from ANT precepts extracted from my reading of the literature:

- The **importance of texts** and other things in linking actors in a network and influencing actions—often by translating the will of one actor into terms that cause another to act (Latour; see also Stalder, 1997; and Yanow, 2004 for a more
general discussion of the skills and processes which can enable successful translations);

- The importance of networks as a base of power to support action\(^{22}\) (Latour, 1986; 2007; Murdoch, 1998 –see also Yaro, 2000 and Weir, 2000 for implicit case study confirmation of this precept in a growth management context);
- The inherent instability of organizations (and of networks themselves), with organizations and networks always in flux and constantly redefined based on shifting connections to other organizations and actors (Latour, 2007; Essex and Brayshay, 2007; see also Tait, 2002). This principle also suggests a corresponding instability for the texts which link and shape organizations; and
- The value of distinguishing between network boundaries (which can and do shift) and the external environment --which may strongly influence the network in a filtered way (see especially Stalder).

Responses to the questions will be woven throughout the case study descriptions, and used to provide further commentary on the relative strengths and weaknesses of communicative regionalism as manifest in the Greater Vancouver case study. The questions themselves consist of the following:

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\(^{22}\) Interestingly, Innes and Booher (2002) who write from a communicative perspective have commented on this as well; however, their analysis does not go far enough.
Table 3.2 Questions Drawn from ANT for Analyzing Inter-Agency Relationships

1. Networks – to what degree did connections between actors and / or the presence of the growth management network influence both MGM processes and outcomes in the case study?

2. Instability – to what extent did the degree of instability present in the network (compared with pockets of relative stability) impact MGM processes and outcomes? By instability, I refer to periods of fluctuation in the network, created by internal or external pressures (or a combination of both) which puts into question relationships, ways of doing things, or even identities that may have once been taken for granted. This definition has been informed by the work of Healey, 1997; Coaffee and Healey, 2003; and Ley and Frost’s (2006) definition of neighbourhood stability.

3. Texts – what roles have various texts – both specific to the case and in the form of “meta-texts” or broader theories of ideal outcomes for MGM (and related activities) – played in governing relationships between actors and efforts to implement MGM goals?

4. Boundaries – how have network boundaries shifted in the course of MGM implementation, and how have these shifts impacted goal achievement and related outcomes?

Source: Author, drawn from literature described on preceding pages.
ANT thus provides a helpful new lens on communicative planning theory—and thus communicative regionalism—by virtue of its ability to broaden our focus beyond the question of whether or not the right mix and quantity of actions to promote dialogue between key actors, as suggested by communicative planning theory and an analytical methodology predicated on communicative planning theory principles. This broader focus enables us to examine a wider array of actions—i.e., not just deliberative actions but instrumental and what I would label power-cognizant actions (those actions which reflect an individual’s or organization’s understanding of its own power relative to the power of other relevant actors in a given situation). The wider array is in turn reflected through the tangible connection points—in this case, the plans, laws and reports on development applications and plan implementation that link institutional actors in the exercise of MGM planning.

If ANT offers strengths in the form of a new perspective, what are its weaknesses? The first difficulty with using ANT to conduct planning research is that it is an analytical, as opposed to normative, theory. In essence, it contains no implicit expectation or recommendation for how the practice of planning should be carried out. Rather, ANT was formulated from a sociological perspective and its main focus appears to be on simply understanding relationships and connections. For an applied discipline like planning, this is an important drawback, but one which could be remedied through further ANT-based exploration in planning case studies. However, this leads to a second and related issue, which is that there have been relatively few planning studies conducted thus far using ANT. Some exceptions include Murdoch and Marsden (1995); Murdoch (1998); Cowel and Murdoch (1999); Tait (2002); Essex and Brayshay (2007); and MacCallum (2008). While these studies provide
helpful analysis, none give explicit direction to shape future planning processes. MacCallum may provide something of an exception in that she uses her analysis to call for greater openness by planners as the writers of plans to document structures which allow for better reflection of stakeholder needs and concerns. My research adds to this base, but pushes its bounds through the specific use of ANT to shed light on gaps in, and possible remedies to, the weaknesses contained in an established normative planning theory such as communicative planning theory. A third concern is that, as described by one of its earlier proponents Bruno Latour, an analysis using ANT principles relies heavily on the collection and examination of details, which risks making the methodology an unwieldy one. Such detail can be particularly problematic in relation to defining the extent of a network in a given case study. For Latour (2007), debates about who belongs (and why they belong) are crucial to a network’s function (pp. 30-33). Yet because networks are constantly changing—expanding to take in new actors, or contracting as actors leave—network delineation is never completed. Again, particularly for an applied discipline like planning, this is potentially problematic if mitigations and adjustments are not applied to the methodology. In his own use of ANT methods, Stalder (1997) suggests that Parsonian systems theory provides helpful guidance on limiting the conceptual extent of a network. According to such theory, the network (or system) includes objects, actors, and processes that are interdependent and can be seen as such. At the same time, there is a clear relationship between the network/system and its external environment. A boundary between the two links them both in a permeable, rather than absolute way, with events outside the network consistently “translated” within the network into terms which have immediate meaning for those within the network. In this regard, Stalder also notes that the very process of “Establishing and maintaining such a
boundary [constitutes] an active [and evolving] process” (Stalder, n.p.). This distinction between network, external factors, and filters between the two will prove helpful in better understanding growth management networks, and provide some reassurance that any apparently arbitrary limitations to defining network components are not intended as permanent definitions.

The final dimension of my analysis compares outcomes for the three nodes studied to outcomes sought in the various MGM plans intended to guide their development during the study period. Outcomes will be assessed matching empirical and qualitative results, statistical data where available, and actions taken by individual agencies, relative to explicit MGM plan goals. Results from this outcome-based analytical dimension will be woven throughout the discussions of the various nodes.

### 3.2 Research Steps

Based on the approach that I have outlined above, understanding the relationship between communicative regionalism and outcomes in my case study involves unpacking the most locally-based or immediate decisions (key milestones) in a MGM process which yielded those outcomes. For senior governments, immediate decisions as they pertain to the MGM process often take the form of new legislation, changes to existing legislation, and capital investments. For municipal governments, regardless of how power and responsibilities may be allocated between different levels of government, the most visible links in the chain are frequently the development of detailed neighbourhood and precinct plans, together with the approval of individual development applications (made by developers). What is somewhat
less consistent is the form of immediate action to be taken by regional governments in this process, as will be shown in both the discussion in Chapters 4 and 5.\textsuperscript{23} In this study, three levels of government (senior; regional; and municipal) are all conceived as part of a more complex institutional growth management network which influences municipal actions. Occasionally a fourth level (the Canadian federal government) has also played a role. Table 3.3 below lists the types of text that will form a point of departure in the context of the current case study. As the reader will notice, texts produced by government agencies of all levels participating in the growth management network being studied are included in the list. Also included are other texts which do not carry the same type of intermediary status, but which nonetheless play a shaping role in network dynamics.

\textsuperscript{23} Because this dissertation seeks ultimately to assist and influence government actors (especially planners); and since tracing the actions and linkages involved in a developer’s decision to build a particular building would constitute an ANT study in its own right, this dissertation will pay particular attention to the government side of the local (as opposed to the developer).
### Table 3.3

**Types of Texts Analysed in the Case Study**

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<th>Type of Text</th>
<th>Expected Contribution:</th>
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| **Senior Government Legislation (Province of British Columbia)**             | - Details on the powers and tools assigned to local governments for metropolitan and regional growth management  
- Details on the evolution of land use planning powers and tools given to municipal governments, which can impact metropolitan growth management                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| **Metropolitan Growth Management Plans & Related Documents (Lower Mainland Regional Planning Board / GVRD / Metro Vancouver)** | Details on:  
- Processes used to develop growth management strategies  
- Strategy goals and their changes over time  
- Types of growth management tools embodied in those strategies, and changes over time, with particular emphasis on employment nodes  
- Results of strategies, and perceptions of these results, as available                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| **Individual Municipal Plan (District of Burnaby / City of Burnaby)**        | - How the plan acknowledges and internalizes relevant provisions of senior government legislation and regional growth strategy goals, especially with regard to employment nodes  
- How the plan changes over time both via holistic update processes (i.e., plan reviews) and site-specific decisions enabled by more fluid texts like plan amendment and rezoning reports                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| **Burnaby Zoning Bylaw**                                                    | - Specific types of zoning used to implement employment growth provisions of municipal plan and metropolitan growth strategy  
- Relevant changes to general zoning classification  
- Relevant changes to zoning designations in employment nodes                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| **Rezoning and Plan Amendment Reports (Fluid Texts)**                       | - Place where localization of considerations from other agents and other places –including “globalization forces” is most clearly evident  
- Evidence of planning staff power in negotiations                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| **Panoramic Accounts**                                                      | - These include newspaper articles, narrative texts, and interviews with key stakeholders in the network, including provincial government officials, current and former regional government officials, former City of Burnaby planners and the current City of Burnaby mayor                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| **Relevant Excerpts from Hansard**                                          | - Hansard is the official repository for transcripts of parliamentary debates occurring between provincial (i.e., senior) government politicians. To some extent, Hansard transcripts might be considered a series of panoramic accounts delivered by individual politicians                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
In addition to texts, the case study also considers interviews with selected actors who worked at various government agencies at some point during the case study period. The interviews were conducted largely to help contextualize the texts, as an ancillary source of detail on key aspects of MGM plan implementation. For reasons of confidentiality, all the actors will remain unnamed; however, each actor when quoted will be referred to with a unique letter, which the reader can reference back to a list where the interviewee’s agency will be indicated (see p. ix for complete list). Three interviewees were all either working in, or had previously worked for, the provincial agency charged with developing and administering the growth management and municipal planning legislation during the case study period. Two interviewees had once worked for the municipality in which the employment nodes being studied were located; and two interviewees had been employed by the regional level of government for much of the case study period.

In all cases, interviews were conducted with civil servants, rather than politicians, citizens’ groups, or developers. The reasons for this were as follows. First, the main source of primary information was texts (reports and other archival documents), and these were intended to shed light on relationships between institutional (i.e., government) actors. As those who typically prepare such texts, bureaucrats rather than politicians would have more detailed knowledge of their contents. Bureaucrats also typically spend a much greater length of time in their respective positions, and possess long institutional memories relative to most (but not all) politicians. Finally, compared with representatives of citizens groups and development interest, bureaucrats have direct accountability to the institutional (government) actors which structure planning processes and create laws to enable planning.
Interviews were done mostly during 2008, with one conducted in early 2009. Each respondent was given a list of open-ended questions prior to the interview (see Appendix 1 for the interview questions) or, in the case of the 2009 interviewee, some draft text from the dissertation was provided for the interviewee to consider and comment upon. The interviews were each scheduled for an hour, but most were closer to 1.5 hours in length. Additional questions were also asked on an ad hoc basis during the interview to clarify remarks, or to request elaboration on a particular text whose implications may not have been sufficiently clear. Respondents were also given the opportunity to read and correct their transcripts. Moreover, respondents received sections of the case study write-up containing quotes they had made in order for them to advise if they had concerns about how their commentary was reported. Adjustments were requested by two interviewees, and were incorporated into the final document.
Chapter 4 – The History and Practical Application of MGM in North America

Among other things, Chapter 4 of this dissertation highlighted a potential disconnect between the processes and desired outcomes associated with growth management. It called for work to better bridge the two, by investigating a particular process theory impacting MGM which I have labelled communicative regionalism. To assist in responding to this call, Chapter 2 provided more detail on the history, major planning works, and critiques associated with the theoretical underpinning of communicative regionalism. But to further appreciate potential gaps between this process theory and desired MGM outcomes, it is worth understanding why desired MGM outcomes have been articulated as such. In other words, to better grasp what results communicative regionalism might potentially achieve, it is important to review how MGM was initially shaped, and how its theories have been applied since the mid-twentieth century (i.e., the Post-War period).

This chapter thus traces the origins and goals of growth management thought. It then reviews Post-war MGM efforts in North America, followed by clarification of some important terms and concepts, and a discussion of how these ideas are manifest in the practical application of MGM thought in present-day settings. The chapter goes on to look at two other examples of metropolitan planning, assessing the degree to which characteristics of communicative regionalism might be present. This assessment will help calibrate the criteria articulated in Chapter 3; and will also help place the case study in comparative context. Finally, the chapter concludes with a summary of key points which will inform the research approach and overall case study analysis.
4.1 Origins and Early Applications

Metropolitan planning emerged in the 19th c. to address industrialization, urbanization, and subsequent overcrowding and disease as migrants flooded cities to escape rural poverty (Hall, 2002, pp. 12-15). It was enabled intellectually by an earlier tradition of Enlightenment thought, and a growing belief (in some states\(^{24}\)) that monarch-led governments should use scientific and rational knowledge to improve national conditions (Outram, 1995).

Before embracing Enlightenment notions, in circumstances where conscious choices were made about the specific placement of buildings in relation to each other, the environment was presumed to be static. In such instances, planning choices were guided by the “unquestionable” reason of those in authority (e.g. priests) (Friedmann, 1987, p. 3). In contrast, during the industrial era, planning began to draw from observation-based (scientific) studies of the urban changes occurring in tandem with industrialization (Soja, 2000, pp. 79-83). Yet planning also gained a utopian current inspired by romantic and spiritual ideals, notably Thomas More’s conception of utopia as transcendence in a spatial form. Such ideals led to several failed experiments in community-building, followed by more practical proposals by thinkers like Ebenezer Howard and Patrick Geddes and, later, regional planning specialists Thomas Adams and Lewis Mumford (see Figure 4.1 for summary of their legacies). Of particular interest in this group was their appreciation for more holistic solutions. This holistic approach acknowledged the various dimensions of community life as well as the natural features of individual areas.

\(^{24}\) Outram suggests that earlier traditions within individual states had a significant impact on the extent to which monarchies were willing to use science to improve conditions for their subjects. For example, in several German states, an earlier tradition known as Cameralism had already legitimized practices of social regulation and concern with broader societal welfare (see p. 103).
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Key Early Thinkers Impacting Metropolitan Planning</th>
<th>Major Work(s)</th>
<th>Planning Legacy</th>
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| Robert Owen                                     | Two utopian communities: New Lanark Mills and New Harmony | ▪ Sought better living and working conditions for his own workers  
▪ In doing so, he showed willingness to act and use resources to improve the status quo in city life. |
| Ebenezer Howard                                | Garden Cities of Tomorrow | ▪ First comprehensive strategy for growth management, although not rooted in place.  
▪ Decentralization solution to urban overcrowding Recognized linked role of job and housing locations on urban form (Hall, 2002)  
▪ Foundation for 20th C. growth management efforts, e.g. Abercrombie’s Greater London Plan. |
| Patrick Geddes                                  | Notion of valley plan of civilization; Active teacher; City plan for Lahore, India | ▪ Precursor of bioregionalist thought (Hodge and Robinson, 2001; see also Meller, 1990)  
▪ Emphasized interactive and integrative approach to planning, going beyond urban design.  
▪ Saw places as distinct and organic; and insisted that planners “survey before plan”. Notion of planner as “conservative surgeon” or gardener who keeps what is viable while encouraging new, healthy growth (Haworth, 2000). |
| Thomas Adams                                    | First regional plan for Metro New York | ▪ Pragmatic implementation of Geddes’s ideas  
▪ Regional planning with strong metropolitan emphasis, and urban core as regional centre.  
▪ “Father” of Canadian regional planning (Hodge and Robinson, 2001) |
| Lewis Mumford                                   | Formed Regional Planning Association of America  
The Culture of Cities  
The City in History | ▪ Also strongly influenced by Geddes (Hodge and Robinson, 2001)  
▪ Prolific writer –not just on urban issues but also sociological and philosophical matters.  
▪ Saw link between urban quality of life and social issues (Mumford, 1995).  
▪ Opposed to large-scale urban renewal projects |

Source: author, except as noted.
While metropolitan planning thought was forged in idealism, its spread to practice was triggered by crisis. Initial implementation efforts were piecemeal and lacked meaningful institutional support. The Great Depression of the 1930s finally enhanced (at least in the US) societal, and thus institutional, receptivity to regional planning. (The latter term encompassed both metropolitan and rural settings, with rural settings of particular interest where there was a desire to address socio-economic disparities or to plan for the stewardship of natural resources). An important “on-the-ground” example of this receptivity occurred with the establishment of the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) by the US president at the time, Franklin D. Roosevelt. The TVA was intended to provide for integrated natural resource management, and to make available a new source of regional electricity from hydroelectric dams (TVA, 2009). Unlike its US counterpart, Canada’s federal government feared creating any further market disruptions through planning at that time (Hodge and Robinson, 2001, p. 62; Grant, 2006). Yet even in the US, many initiatives were delayed in their implementation when the Second World War broke out.

Nonetheless, World War II eventually facilitated the larger scale adoption of regional planning in general, and metropolitan planning in particular, in Western Europe and North America. The war’s influence on planning actually began during fighting, with the introduction of new war effort bureaucratic and logistical techniques which were then used in peacetime reconstruction (Hobsbawm, 1996, pp. 44-48). The war’s influence continued in a more overt way after 1945. At that time, European planning focussed on rebuilding bombed cities. Patrick Abercrombie was the leading UK planner in this regard, whose Greater
London Plan\textsuperscript{25} sought to decentralize 400,000 people into eight new towns beyond London (Hall, 2002). In North America (as well as in Europe) family formation by returning soldiers caused new urban growth pressures and rapid suburbanization, which then called for metropolitan planning.

Besides growth management, various federal housing initiatives in both the US and Canada promoted home ownership among returning soldiers. Notable among these were the Housing and Home Finance Agency in the US, established in 1949 to facilitate low-ratio (10\% down payment) mortgages (Hall, 2002), and the Canada Mortgage and Housing Company\textsuperscript{26} in Canada (Grant, 2006). These programmes, along with massive highway construction funding initiatives, helped further dispersed growth. Broad acceptance of the septic tank as an alternative to full integration of new homes into municipal or regional sewer systems was a further factor hastening decentralization in North America, since it allowed homes to be developed independently of such government systems and any growth shaping influences they might have (Hall). Still, efforts were also made in North America to encourage comprehensive metropolitan plans.

\subsection{4.2 Post-War MGM Efforts in North America}

During the 1950s and much of the 1960s, planning approaches in general were informed by a new technical, or modernist utopia. This utopia was epitomized by large master-planned social housing projects and communities, which were in turn inspired by the work of

\textsuperscript{25} Actually published before the war’s conclusion
\textsuperscript{26} Originally named the Central Mortgage and Housing Corp (Grant, 2006).
Le Corbusier (e.g. the Regent Park North slum clearance project in Toronto was one such example, according to Grant). Such large scale development and subdivision was not without critique (see Breheny, 2004 and Bruegmann, 2005, Ch. 9 for summaries), particularly as massive developments such as Levittown received notoriety. Interestingly, both the sprawl developed using modernist techniques, as well as the policies that created its antidote, were informed by rational-comprehensive approaches. The latter were ideally suited to metropolitan and other forms of regional planning—at least in some respects—because of their appreciation for the interconnectedness of issues. That said, even advocates of rational-comprehensive planning sought to put limits on the breadth of issues addressed in such plans (e.g. Kent, 1964, especially pp. 46-52).

The widespread reliance on rational-comprehensive planning in general did not automatically create strong political will for MGM uniformly throughout North America. Notwithstanding an interest in regional concepts, fragmented political jurisdictions in several large American cities made it difficult to implement them through a single institution (see especially Lewis, 1996; Yaro, 2000 in the context of New York; also Soja, 2000 and Gainsborough, 2001 in the context of Los Angeles). Some US efforts did seek a more holistic approach to metropolitan issues in the 1960s, such as the 1966 establishment of the Federal Department of Housing and Urban Development and a model cities program to promote integrated planning solutions to low income neighbourhoods (Hall, 2002). It was also during this decade that the US federal government passed a law requiring the creation of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs); but these agencies were voluntary and had little power until the 1990s (a transformation to be discussed shortly). Yet broader legislation to promote
MGM such as the proposed National Land Use Policy Act (under consideration from 1968-1976) was unsuccessful (Bollens, 1992; see also Bruegmann, 2005, Chapter Twelve).

In Canada’s largest cities there was stronger political support (relative to the US) for metropolitan-scale planning and the institutions needed to support it were quickly established by senior governments (see Hodge and Robinson, Chapter Eight). Such support today has produced a system of metropolitan governance which has yielded a more uniform distribution of services and resources within a given region compared with similar-sized American metropolitan areas (Bourne, 2006, p. 455). The first Canadian agencies established for this purpose included the Metropolitan Planning Commission of Greater Winnipeg, the Greater Vancouver Regional District, and the Capital Regional District in Victoria (Hodge and Robinson). The most formal and powerful of these organizations, established in 1954 was Metropolitan Toronto, which had the authority to make broad land use designations (see Section 4.6.1 for detail).

Notwithstanding its large-scale application, post-war forms of modernist planning in general sowed the seeds of their own demise, exacerbated by land use approaches which separated functions and communities (Ellin, 2006, p. 18), and receiving a knock-out punch at the regional scale from neo-liberal administrations elected in the US and the UK during the late 1970s and early 1980s27. These administrations sought to reduce government activity in many areas, and responded to increasingly cynical attitudes towards government among the

27 In Canada such administrations were not elected until the mid-1980s at the federal level; but in individual provinces like British Columbia, neo-liberalism was apparent from the mid-1970s on, as will be discussed further in Chapter Four.
general populace\textsuperscript{28}. They also coincided with growing disillusionment with (but not totally wanting to abandon) the technical utopianism embodied in modernism, which had failed to deliver on its promises.

According to MacLeod and Ward (2002), it was during this period that broader utopian thinking at large within society (for example, the notion that science, technology and rational systems would solve all of society’s problems) began to weaken and splinter –hastened by de-industrialization and urban fiscal woes (p. 155). This splintering coincided with growing dystopian views of city life, emphasizing the decaying, unhealthy and threatening parts of the city. The dystopian view projected such scary places into an undesired future --from which the only liberation was escapism into controlled enclaves. The latter tended to be privately managed, and physically separate from the rest of the city. Such enclaves also promoted reassurance through post-modern design approaches which referenced elements of the urban past (MacLeod and Ward, 2002; Soja, 2000, Ch.10; Harvey, 2000).

Metropolitan planning was nominally still carried out in the US through the MPOs during this time. Complementary actions were undertaken more locally, such as the large scale purchase of parkland, which helped provide some \textit{de facto} containment in some regions (Hall, 2002). Yet whatever clout and effectiveness the activity had once enjoyed were both drastically reduced by the late 1970s, as evident in the final failure of the proposed \textbf{National Land Use Policy Act}. Notable exceptions did occur, such as in Hawaii, and in Portland,\textsuperscript{28} Saint-Martin argues that such attitudes were stoked by leaders who saw opportunities for bolstering their own profiles through extensive fault-finding with public sector institutions and bureaucrats (2001, p. 578).
Oregon where state-level provisions launched in the 1970s enabled effective metropolitan containment which would be heralded as a huge success in the 1990s.

During this same period, Canadian metropolitan planning fared somewhat better, managing to steer a middle course between strong centralism associated with British metropolitan planning models and what Hodge refers to as the largely “unfettered localism” of American cities (1985, cited in Hodge and Robinson, 2001, p. 407). Because parameters for individual Canadian metropolitan planning agencies were set by provincial government legislation, the latter has played a significant, cumulative role in distinguishing the character of Canadian metropolitan planning. Sancton suggests that provincial governments have been far more likely than their American state counterparts to alter metropolitan governance structures and legislative contexts, and thus more able to provide for a higher level of region-scale intervention overall (2001, p. 544). Nonetheless, even in Canada some regional planning setbacks occurred, including the abolition of Metropolitan Toronto in the 1990s and replacement with a mega-city (Filion 2000; Sancton, 2006), and the loss of regional planning powers for Greater Vancouver in 1983 (discussed in Chapter 5).

In spite of the cynicism of the 1970s through the early 1990s in Britain, the US and Canada, a renewed interest in *New Regionalism* would eventually emerge—a renewed interest in regional planning distinguished from earlier forms of regional planning which had been founded on Keynesian assumptions. New regionalist thought also purported to allow for more flexible and fluid governance arrangements, as well as supporting a greater focus on improved and more integrated urban design and land use patterns (discussed in Kipfer and Wirsig, 2004).
Regionalists cited long lists of environmental, economic and social reasons for pursuing effective metropolitan planning (Wheeler, 2004, Ch. 10; Wheeler, 2002; Beatley, 2000; also Foster’s 1997 discussion of regional impulses). Some of this more recent interest reflected growing awareness of a need for a more functional, intermediate level between local and senior levels of governance. Moreover, especially in Europe, such recognition has in turn both responded to, and perpetuated, a rescaling of governance (Haughton and Counsell, 2004).29

Within the United States, new regionalism was boosted, and perhaps acknowledged by, the 1991 passage of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA). ISTEA helped in a pragmatic way to increase the profile and influence of MPOs, largely because of the new role the act gave in making decisions on federal allocations to regional transportation projects (Bollens, 1992; Lewis and Sprague, 1997; and Goetz et al., 2002). In fact, Lewis and Sprague claim that such legislation has “bolstered the otherwise limited or absent regional role... serving as something of a proxy for the latent public interest in achieving region wide transportation” (1997, p. ix). Two program areas in particular have been of value for land use activities: The Congestion Management and Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ) and the regional portion of the Surface Transportation Program (STP). Both program areas allow for a wider range of transportation improvements, including the promotion of alternatives to single occupant vehicle use, such as transit. The act was renewed and enhanced in 1998 (Goetz et al., 2002) and then again in 2005 (Wikipedia, 2009), continuing to reinforce the value of MPOs.

29 This notion of a conscious and careful reconfiguration of the state’s role is also discussed at length by Cameron and Palen (2004) and Graham and Marvin (2001).
Goetz et al. describe MPOs as generally embodying collaborative processes, in that they help “bring broader groups of stakeholders together to encourage-collaborative problem-solving on larger issues of mutual concern” (2002, p. 90). From a process perspective, MPOs could arguably be considered both precursors to, and eventual models of, communicative regionalism in the US. They were a precursor in the sense that they promoted voluntary cooperation to discuss regional-scale issues, but were not yet informed by the array of communicative planning thought which would emerge particularly in the 1960s through 1980s. In fact, dominated by technical analyses and forecasts of transportation demand (particularly once they began to allocate larger amounts of transportation funding), the processes used in MPOs were arguably technocratic (e.g. Innes and Gruber, 1995; also Bollens, 1997, p. 117). This may in part be due to the extremely large size and diversity of some MPOs such as SCAG, which must often compete to some extent with single-purpose agencies (in fields with technocratic histories, such as transportation planning) as a result of overlapping jurisdictions (e.g. Bollens, p. 116). In more recent years, however, particularly with the adoption of the descendents of ISTEA, federal funding has provided greater incentives for regional collaboration (Goetz et al., 2002; see also SCAG, 2008, p. 3). At the same time, practical exposure to communicative planning and other consensus-based models has enhanced the willingness of many US metropolitan areas to move towards what might be considered communicative regionalism. Section 4.6 provides a more grounded discussion of this.
Within Canada, where metropolitan activities were flourishing\textsuperscript{30}, there were aspects of both technocratic and communicative antecedents – albeit with different manifestations from the US—in metropolitan planning processes. The Canadian federal government has not seen a need to replicate the creation of American MPOs to rationalize transportation investments, largely because structures have already been in place at provincial and regional levels to coordinate transportation planning. Nonetheless, from the 1990s onwards, new initiatives undertaken within different provinces have also sought to bolster regional thinking, notably the British Columbia 1995 \textit{Growth Strategies Act}, and the Ontario 2005 \textit{Places to Grow Act}. In this context, my research appears timely.

4.3 A Review of Outcome-Based Theories

This set of theories essentially prescribes, or at least gives strong hints about the ideal spatial form to emerge from MGM activities. From their visions for spatial form, these theories also encompass prescriptions such as urban containment policies like green belts, and nodal development models, where growth is channelled to specific destinations and encouraged to concentrate rather than spread further afield. According to Adams (2006) a truly comprehensive approach to growth management emphasizes not only containment, but definition and intensification of existing areas while at the same time reducing pressures for new developments and avoiding urban sprawl (p. 73).

Roberts (2004) argues that there are three main types of goals articulated by outcome-oriented theories of MGM or, as it is encompassed within the UK notion of \textit{regional spatial

\textsuperscript{30} see Hodge and Robinson, 2001, Chapter Eight for more detailed and periodized discussion
planning. These include: fostering improved sanitary conditions and public health; improved development standards and solutions to problems within the city (e.g. overcrowding and housing shortages), while containing expansion outwards (what Filion, 2000, might term concentration-oriented solutions); and managing growth by selectively expanding the metropolis. Ward (1994) proposes a compatible, but expanded and more spatially-focused version of the same typology, with four different approaches to regional spatial planning or MGM: 1) redevelopment of existing built-up areas through slum clearances and public-private partnerships (which have traditionally been infill, or concentration-oriented models); 2) urban containment through restrictions on outward expansions; 3) balanced growth models, which tried to ensure greater equality in the distribution of growth between and within regions; and 4) planned decentralization, often associated with new town and / or regional node development. My brief discussion of outcome-focused MGM theories is structured around Ward’s categories. Of course, many regions today heed Adams’s (2006) advice and make use of the full complement of Ward’s typology, embodying the compromise which Breheny (2004) advocates between centrist and decentrist visions of growth management and quality of life for human settlements.

**Infill / Concentration-Oriented Models**

Theories calling for, and recommending an approach to infill, or the redevelopment of central and adjoining areas to better standards and at higher densities emerged more recently than other models of growth management. They are ultimately centrist (to use Breheney’s term) or concentration-oriented (Filion, 2000) in that they seek to reinforce the core of a metropolitan area. While Breheney does not sufficiently define the scope of the metropolitan
core, one could presume that it encompasses inner and middle suburbs where densities have begun (or have the potential to) significantly increase in comparison with more outlying territories. Such infill models originated with a more varied range of thinkers and ideas compared with some of the other models. For example, LeCorbusier’s ideas for concentrating people in large high rise developments, replacing smaller settlement pockets in inner cities, shared Jane Jacobs’s notion of reinforcing the dominance of the central city, albeit through different measures (Breheney, 2004). This juxtaposition is somewhat ironic since Jacobs was appalled by the massive slum clearance projects she saw in 1960s North America, often the vehicle through which LeCorbusier’s ideas were implemented; and she called for a different approach to urban revitalization, through the preservation and compatible intensification of existing urban villages.

Within Canada during the 1960s and 1970s, metropolitan planning became a more common practice through the formal establishment of new metropolitan agencies (Hodge and Robinson, 2001 pp. 233-234). It was also during this time throughout North America that suburbanization of the early post-war years continued (Hall, 2002; Hayden, 2003; and Bruegmann, 2005). Starting in the late 1980s, however, concerns with sustainability re-energized centrist ideas for growth management and led to the development of new urbanist ideas for higher density, but more human-scaled redevelopment in core areas to take pressure off greenfield sites (Breheney, 2004). These concerns would ultimately galvanize into a new movement advocating “smart growth” (see Section 3.4). Moreover, as will be examined in the case study (especially Chapters 5 and 7), concentration-oriented ideas have occurred in decentralized inner suburban nodes, many of which are increasingly difficult to distinguish
Urban Containment

The notion of urban containment first emerged in Ebenezer Howard’s 19th C. Garden City model, articulated as a greenbelt to prevent further expansion of the metropolitan area. The most well-known greenbelt was designated in plans for London by Sir Patrick Abercrombie, and implemented during the post war period (see Hall, 2002 for more discussion). Other examples include Greater Manchester, UK; Portland, Oregon; Boulder, Colorado; and my case study region of Greater Vancouver. The oldest of these greenbelts have been in place for 30-60 years. Other more contemporary approaches have included strict land use controls for sites outside a containment boundary, and policies which deny or inhibit servicing outside a containment boundary (e.g. the Capital Regional District in Victoria, British Columbia.) Such containment measures have had some successes, particularly in Portland Oregon (Knaap and Nelson, 1992; Nelson and Moore, 1996); yet there are recent debates on their ongoing management, particularly where development in extremely rapid-growing areas simply “leap-frogs” over the greenbelts, yielding exurban sprawl even farther from services than if the expansion had occurred without leap-frogging (Hall et al., 1973, Vol. 2; Nelson and Moore; Daniels and Bowers, 1997; Weitz and Moore, 1998; also Bruegmann, 2005, especially Chapters 11-13).

The urban containment model presumes that, by limiting the extent of a region’s urbanization potential, metropolitan form becomes more efficient. The approach is expected to naturally
spark density increases while preserving open spaces outside contained areas. Often urban containment involves land-use controls (prohibitions through laws or memoranda of understanding) which prohibit development outside the contained areas. Yet, as noted above, urban containment can involve refusals to service lands developed beyond the contained area. Pendall and Martin refer to a suite of consistent policies in this regard as the application of an urban service boundary (2002, p. 5). Containment can further occur naturally where mountains and water bodies effectively limit the extent of urbanization. Finally, urban containment may be used in tandem with a polycentric approach—in theory, helping to intensify densities in newly created centres (see Table 4.2 in Section 4.4).

**Balanced Growth Models**

Balanced growth models advanced by economic development scholarship are implicitly linked with MGM. This link has existed for over a century, as the notion of balanced growth was embodied in Howard's Garden City. For example, Howard also recognized the disadvantages of urban overcrowding for rural residents.

Implementation efforts espousing this link did not truly begin in earnest until the 1960s, despite significant interest in this notion during the Depression of the 1930s\(^{31}\). Such efforts drew significantly from the growth pole theory of economist Francois Perroux. Growth pole theory claimed that critical masses (agglomerations) of particular industries promoted economic development in the surrounding area; and the presence or absence of such

\(^{31}\) This was in large part due to the disruptive effect of World War II. One exception occurred with the establishment and work of the Tennessee Valley Authority, which began in the 1930s.
“magnet” industries explained inter-regional wealth and employment disparities. Scholars like Hansen (1967) and Hermansen (1972) were among the earliest to take this analysis in a normative spatial direction (i.e., as a policy recommendation), with assumptions that focused investment in a limited number of centres within a region would automatically bring growth to the rest. This would result in what Martin and Sunley (1998) described as “spatial Keynesianism”. It was translated in practice to a belief that attracting a “propulsive” industry, and an emphasis on attracting one or two key firms with strong export potential to a particular regional node would induce related activities to come and result in balanced growth throughout the surrounding area (see Pike et al., 2006, Ch. 3 for further discussion).

On the regional planning side, balanced growth theories also assigned relatively uniform roles to cities in the economies of their respective regions (Hodge and Robinson, 2001). Moreover, they presumed that corporate demand—as it was narrowly understood by policymakers—was more important than land supply (and any related constraints) in determining where new activities would locate (Pike et al.). These theories would gain favour at a national level in Canada during the 1960s and 1970s as a means of addressing large scale regional disparities (see Hodge and Robinson, Chapter 6 for further discussion).

Particularly because of their connection to economically-interventionist policy responses (which were increasingly disfavoured at larger, e.g. national government scales), theories in this group began to fall out of favour in the late 1970s. In other cases, such as many American metropolitan regions, these theories had simply never been applied at all.

Especially in the 1980s, they were replaced by a neoclassical understanding of regional disparities as temporary only, eventually to be corrected through synergistic adjustments of
prices, wages, and adjustments (Martin and Sunley, 1998). More recently, however, there has been renewed interest in more sophisticated economic policy approaches which provide for some (but not complete) attempts to redress certain types of spatial economic disparities. These newer approaches have been inspired by the examples of regions where remarkable economic transformations have occurred, such as Silicon Valley in the United States, and Italy’s Emilia-Romagna region. Within contemporary MGM strategies, there appears to be an implicit (but thus far untested) acknowledgement in contemporary infill theories that nodal development strategies will continue to have beneficial economic distribution effects at the spatial level. This implicit assumption has been present in Greater Vancouver’s Regional Town Centres concept (discussed especially in Chapters 5 and 7).

**Planned Decentralization**

As with the other two types of outcome-based theories, the notion of planned decentralization of population and industries was also embodied in Howard’s Garden City model. The earliest concrete expression of this concept came in Sir Patrick Abercrombie’s Plan for Greater London, which sought to disperse population and employment to new towns and existing towns outside the built-up area (Hall, 2002; Roberts, 2004). Plans notwithstanding, the momentum for dispersal came in Europe and North America from rapid post-war population growth. Particularly in the North American context, this dispersal was facilitated by highway construction (Filion, 2000; Hayden, 2003; Hall, 2002). The large scale of this growth led in the 1960s to renewed interest in creating focal points for dispersed residential and commercial growth, still based loosely on Howard’s notions, but with a heightened interest in attracting higher population densities (including apartment-based populations).
Such decentralization was to include office employment, which was recognized as an important source of future new jobs in a changing economy (Daniels, 1975). The Greater Vancouver case is a prime example of planned decentralization. Interestingly, however, just before the GVRD’s 1975 Livable Region Plan (LRP) was endorsed, an extensive study of planned decentralization and containment efforts in the UK suggested that such decentralization might ultimately result in more centres outside the CBD playing a dominant role as population and employment nodes (Hall et al., 1973, Vol. 1.)—a trend which would create new challenges for providing efficient transit services.

**Implications of These Models for Case Study Analysis**

The above outcome-based theories have played an important role in MGM planning activities, particularly over the last half of the 20th century. Yet it is difficult to concretely demonstrate that one approach is consistently more successful than the other, particularly given the lack of comprehensive, multi-regional analysis comparing the results in many regions together, using the same evaluative criteria (Deakin, 1989; Landis, 1992; Nelson and Moore, 1996). Other difficulties in making a scientific assessment of growth management implementation include:

- Problems in establishing a *control* scenario for testing results, i.e., envisioning after the fact how a region might have looked without the application of growth management controls;
- The extremely long time horizons (multiple decades) needed to implement MGM plans
and strategies (Nelson and Moore, 1996; see also Bruegmann, 2005);

- Very dramatic shifts in the development industry which can arise over such long time periods, such as the growing popularity of office parks (described in Coriolis, 1993; and Frej et al., 2001); and

- Significant political shifts (as described in Chapter 5) which can arise over such long time periods, and can impact the legal and fiscal resource parameters needed to enable growth management efforts.

Bruegmann concludes that our lack of understanding of what creates the sprawl (battled through MGM efforts), and whether it has in fact been worsening or improving in relative terms, should make us extremely cautious about proposing any remedies for it. Yet as Friedmann (1978) reminds us, planning is all about managing through uncertainty; and what counts is society’s ability to adjust its actions quickly and as appropriately as possible given the knowledge available at the time --if the initial results are displeasing.

Researchers have successfully categorized metropolitan regions according to the relative strength of containment policies in place (Nelson and Dawkins, 2004), and to the institutional mechanisms they have used to create and enforce such policies (see also Gale, 1992; Bollens, 1992 and Hodge and Robinson, 2001). They have also made some assessment of growth management implementation (Baldassare, 1981; Baldassare and Protash, 1982; Dubbink, 1984; Nelson and Moore, 1996; Tomalty, 1997; Filion, 2000 and 2003; Tomalty and Alexander, 2005). Nonetheless, many institutional, legal, and path-dependent investment variables, which have affected regions’ ability and willingness to implement containment
policies, are difficult to isolate (e.g., Lewis’s 1996 comparison of Portland and Denver; Foster’s 1997 study of Detroit; and Filion’s 2000 study of Toronto). While the Greater Vancouver case study analysed in this dissertation will comment on such variables, including their influence here on the region’s spatial growth patterns, it will not aspire to definitive claims regarding the ideal spatial model for MGM. In large part, this would be a study unto itself. But even if the “perfect” spatial model were confirmed, there remain momentous challenges posed by plan implementation (Laurian et al., 2004).

4.4 Important MGM Terms and Their Relationships to Practical Applications

This section revisits key terms and their relationship to practice, with a view to providing more clarity on the spatial ideals being sought through MGM activities. Important terms described here include polycentrism, sustainable urban planning, and smart growth. These terms effectively cut across the four categories of outcome theory described earlier in this chapter. The discussion below points out overlaps to the extent possible and later summarizes these in Table 4.2.

Given the strongly technocratic application of MGM planning from the 1950s through the 1980s (in those instances where it was applied), outcome-based models of MGM during this time were emphasized by large-scale efforts to influence metropolitan morphology. In this context morphology is understood the overall pattern and spread of a given settlement: “the study of urban tissue, or fabric as a means of discerning the underlying structure of the built landscape” (Wikipedia, 2008). An important application of the outcome models described
earlier was the notion of polycentrism. The latter typically blended the urban containment, planned decentralization, and balanced growth models described earlier. In a few cases, where new nodes were identified in existing suburbs, some degree of infill would be needed, but this aspect of polycentrism received less attention in North America before the 1980s.

Polycentrism literally means “many centres”, and has been directly linked to Ebenezer Howard’s Garden City concept, and Patrick Abercrombie’s practical implementation of that concept through his Greater London Plan (Hall, 2002, p. 64). Early polycentric policies sought a focus for decentralization through a series of suburban clusters of housing and jobs. Other terms often used for these clusters include: town centres, suburban nodes, and edge cities. As Lynch (1960) and Healey (1997) both point out, the pattern created in this growth management approach tends to be explicitly hierarchical, with smaller nodes linking to, and dependent on, larger nodes which were in turn linked to the metropolitan core. As will be demonstrated in the case study portion of this dissertation (especially Chapters 7 to 9), this hierarchical approach was attempted in Greater Vancouver.

The polycentric approach, while popular, suffered from its overly modernistic leanings -- notably assumptions of universal transferability requiring little or no adaptation for specific settings. Compounding the universality assumption was a failure by many of those who would apply it to understand important premises of the economic development theories and concepts which had informed the notions, and to understand the different economic functions of different centres within a given urban hierarchy. For example, in the case of the UK, Daniels (1975) observed that, while extensive programs to decentralize London-based office
jobs had been successful within that region, they had not instigated office growth beyond the southeast region of England (p. 270), in large part given London’s primacy in the national urban hierarchy. Moreover, he cautioned that different growth factors were important to office development in regions outside of London; and that using a decentralized nodal approach in other regions might actually cause harm. This was because “[s]uburban office centres such as those in Manchester currently depend less on dispersal from the CBD than those in London, and much more on offices moving in from outside the conurbations. In this way they are competing for scarce resources rather than complementing and controlling CBD growth” (p. 269). As will be discussed in the case study, important arguments were made about the misapplication of polycentric principles to the Greater Vancouver office market (Hutton and Davis, 1985).

Moreover, policy efforts to promote such outcomes often included population and employment targets, and initially emphasized regulatory measures. But as politicians and communities became increasingly cynical about government intervention (see St. Martin, 2001), new tactics came to the forefront. Hutton (1998) describes this as an era of strategic management in planning, when policy makers experimented with more strategic techniques; and where quality of life issues accrued a greater level of importance.

More recent years have seen a renewed interest in growth management targets, as groups and individuals concerned with environmental harm by automobile-induced air pollution have renewed the call for land use planning which provides more jobs closer to where people live, thereby reducing total vehicle miles travelled (VMT) (Weitz, 2003; Filion, 2003; Cervero

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32 Emphasis added.
and Duncan, 2006). Similarly, smart growth advocates have advocated the complementary yet distinct goal of balanced jobs-to-housing ratios in individual municipalities or sub-regions within metropolitan areas (Weitz; Cervero and Duncan; and Cervero, 1995). Achieving such balance is often enhanced by, but not always contingent upon, a robust polycentric strategy.

But what have several decades of polycentric employment growth management achieved? Rather than clustering in desired suburban job nodes, new office space (the largest source of jobs) in the US has either continued to focus in downtown cores, or become dispersed in the form of sprawled, unfocused commercial developments outside the downtown (and outside suburban nodes). In fact, two-thirds of all non-downtown office space in the United States has migrated to edgeless cities (Lang, 2003, p.1). For sustainability advocates, this is undesirable given the differences in commuting patterns to focused and unfocused suburban employment centres. For example, in a 1989 study of the 57 largest suburban job nodes in the US, average commuter trips to more sprawling employment areas like office parks were longer than trips to denser suburban downtowns (Cervero 1989). Other research indicates that suburban workers are generally far likelier to commute via single occupant automobile (vs. transit and walking) than workers in metropolitan central business districts (CBDs) (Cervero, 1995, p. 342). This finding appears to be replicated in the Big Bend node of my case study, where 92% of commuter trips are purportedly via single-occupant vehicle (Interviewee G, 2009).
Dispersed office patterns as observed by Lang are not just occurring in the US. Most suburban jobs in Sydney Australia remain scattered, rather than concentrated in nodes. (NSW Planning Department, 1991 in Freestone and Murphy, 1998, n.p.). Any successful suburban concentrations there have arisen largely from state intervention, including both investment and regulatory activities (Freestone and Murphy, 1998). And, while not specifically addressing the issue of nodes, O’Connor and Healy find that Melbourne has seen a proportional decline in its overall jobs-to-housing balance from 1966-1996 (2004, p. 36).

Within Canada, there is similar evidence of jobs bypassing designated suburban nodes. A Metropolitan Toronto office space development study finds more new regional office construction from 1954 to 2005 in dispersed and outlying locations than in decentralized nodes. Over this period, 38% of total office space gains occurred in office parks outside the City of Toronto and in more dispersed locations, compared with 11% of gains occurring in concentrated office sub-centres (nodes). Moreover, this discrepancy between dispersed and concentrated growth has been greatest from 1993 to 2005, when office parks and dispersed locations contributed to 70% of total CMA office growth, and office sub-centres only 1% (Canadian Urban Institute, 2005, p. 11). And Greater Vancouver, as will be discussed later, has also had difficulties with focused job decentralization.

Despite an ongoing reliance on morphology-based tools, MGM has also been influenced by systems-based approaches, although these were not seriously considered to any great extent

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33 Canada’s largest, and dominant metropolis.
34 That is, within the Census Metropolitan Area, as defined by Statistics Canada.
35 The remainder of this growth occurred in either downtown or Mid-town Toronto locations, constituting a more traditional (vs. a dispersed) type of employment centre.
in North American MGM planning exercises until after the release of the Bruntland Commission Report in 1987. The latter helped promote planning approaches with greater emphases on livability and sustainability (Hutton, 1998). Although relatively new, these drew substantially from pre-modernist foundations set by scholars like Geddes and Mumford. Moreover, as Bruegmann (2005) claims, they were influenced by the rise of the environmental movement (which gained momentum during the 1960s) and strengthened by related concerns about resource depletion and toxic population growth rooted in Malthus’s 18th c. predictions.

The sustainability notion rationalizing today’s 21st c. growth management efforts is quite broad. Its official starting point is the definition which originated with the Bruntland Commission: “meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (United Nations General Assembly, 1987). Berke and Conroy (2000) define this term in for planning practice as identifying needs and developing plans which ensure

*communities will be able to continuously reproduce and revitalize themselves [and whereby]... built environments become more livable; ecosystems become healthier; economic development becomes more responsive to the needs of place rather than furthering the profits of a powerful few; and the benefits of improved environmental and economic conditions become more equitably distributed* (n.p.).

They also describe three dimensions of sustainable urban planning, consisting of:

- Facilitating system reproduction and revitalization;
- Seeking balance between environmental, economic and social values; and
- Recognizing the interconnectedness between local and global events and forces.

This notion of balance is strongly linked to the older metropolitan tradition of comprehensive planning thought, although not necessarily in its rational-comprehensive form.

In terms of sustainable growth management planning, Beatley (2000) has made a strong case for land use planning as a tool for conserving biodiversity. Interestingly, while only tangentially related to the employment nodes studied in this case, the GVRD has in very recent years explicitly recognized this benefit, by creating its own biodiversity strategy (Metro Vancouver, 2008b). In part, this strategy may have also been motivated by the perception that provincial and federal legislative tools to protect certain types of habitat (species at risk, and salmon of value to the commercial fishing industry) might carry additional strength beyond existing tools for the containment function of MGM (see Douglas, 2002 and British Columbia, 2004 for more detail on those tools). But biodiversity is only one of several ecological features aided by growth management. Others include: air quality; soil quality and capacity to support soil-bound agriculture; and ground and surface water quality. These have also been recognized through tangible efforts in the case study region.

Within the sustainability framework, the issue of growth management has become particularly salient within the outer portions of metropolitan areas, which Hodge and Robinson label city-regions. Such areas experience faster rates of geographic growth compared to population growth. Hodge and Robinson identify many reasons for which greater metropolitan order is sought, including:
- Containing and manage growth in traditional metropolitan (vs. exurban) boundaries;\(^{36}\)
- Ensuring continued metropolitan core vitality and population thresholds;
- Reducing infrastructure costs which arise from low-density sprawl;
- Preventing environmental problems linked to the cumulative results of urbanization (2001, pp. 299-300).

Where growth management has overlapped with sustainability planning, there have been concerns about the sustainability concept’s lack of specificity, and thus its inability to achieve meaningful outcomes (Andrews, 1997; and Haughton and Counsell, 2004). Other scholars and practitioners have elaborated on the concept with more focused monitoring systems, such as the regional and local planning indicators described by Hoernig and Seasons, 2004; and the criteria for testing plan sustainability described above by Berke and Conroy, 2000). Yet there are fears that this may still not be enough (Andrews; Haughton and Counsell). Moreover, even where they have succeeded in addressing limited ecological and liveability variables, further indicator development is needed, particularly with regard to economic issues (see, for example, Keats et al., 2001 and Anand and Sen, 2000 for further discussion).

\(^{36}\) In essence, even when undertaken for a sustainability (i.e., systems-based) rationale, contemporary growth management thinking retains various aspects of modernism –particularly in its desire to provide greater control over metropolitan form.
More recently, scholars and practitioners have sought to address these weaknesses. Wheeler’s work has been helpful in two key respects. First, it has recognized an explicit link between earlier planning experts and sustainable development goals, by recognizing and labelling four clear streams in urban sustainability thought, which highlights the connections and differences between old and new forms of holistic regional planning (1995). A second way in which Wheeler’s ideas further our notions of sustainability planning is by providing some broad, and yet meaningful, process-oriented touchstones for planners. In a later work, Planning for Sustainability (2002), Wheeler is even more explicit about the need for thoughtful holistic planning, and about what it should look like in its contemporary form (see his also 2004 work for a direct connection to regional-scale issues).

Another thinker who helps direct us to more effective planning responses to sustainability imperatives, and in ways which circumvent the holistic vs. incrementalist tension planning often faces, is Nan Ellin. In her latest book, Integral Urbanism, Ellin is critical of both modernist and postmodernist idealism in city-building, claiming that the two combined have yielded “sprawl, the growing perception of fear, a declining sense of community and environmental degradation” (2006, p. 1). Her approach is both process- and outcome-driven, but leans somewhat more towards outcomes. It is to be achieved by incremental interventions to the urban realm which appreciate and enhance five broader states of being for the city. These states consist of: hybridity, connectivity, porosity, authenticity, and vulnerability. For Ellin, such interventions need not be formally planned, and they can happen at a range of scales (ibid., p. 10). Moreover, they are not intended as “static” or final
fixes, but should be re-examined over time to ensure continued suitability to evolving conditions.

Two of Ellin’s desired qualities which are of interest from a metropolitan perspective include connectivity and porosity. Connectivity is about ensuring that people, functions, and diverse precincts of the city enjoy some sort of linkage with each other, in order to gain symbiotic benefit (ibid., p. 19). In this manner, Ellin seeks to surmount the fragmentation that she believes was begun under modernism and entrenched through postmodernist planning. For, while the notion of connectivity existed in the works of earlier theorists, she laments that their ideas were not taken up in a significant way. Moreover, in today’s exponentially more car-dominated landscapes, more dramatic interventions (and in larger quantity) than before are now needed (ibid., p. 58). Ellin recognizes that many isolated projects have today yielded some benefit in this regard; and she calls for their continuation, supplemented by renewed efforts to understand and discuss the bigger picture. She refers to such interventions as “creating ligaments (connective tissues), mending seams, darning holes, and healing wounds” (ibid., p. 58).

Ellin’s goal of porosity is taken directly from the study of ecological systems; and it relates to the filtering of elemental and human flows between distinct parts of the city. Ellin explains that such filtered flows are achieved (metaphorically) via membranes which enable movement but at a more gradual pace than flows through open channels. These membranes maintain legibility and security within urban environments by retaining the protective and orienting aspects of boundaries and edges (ibid., p. 82). Porosity can be achieved through
numerous urban design responses on specific sites (e.g. *ibid.*, pp. 70-75). But what she calls *administrative* porosity, and *spatial* porosity (*ibid.*, pp. 75-76) have conceptual relevance beyond the design aspects of planning, and could present a point of departure for new thinking at the metropolitan scale.

**Smart Growth**

Another important application of MGM theories comes from a popular movement known as *Smart Growth*. This term has been used to refer to varied, and at times contradictory, approaches to MGM. It is often linked with the development of the *Ahwahnee Principles* and the Congress for New Urbanism, but became entrenched in the planning and popular lexicon when the State of Maryland adopted its *Smart Growth Priority Funding Areas Act* (Appleyard, 2005) – legislation with a conscious growth management focus. According to Daniels (2001), the act included:

- A state requirement for local governments to set growth and infrastructure priority areas, which will then be eligible for state grants and loans;
- Resolving liability issues that impede brownfield redevelopment;
- A job creation tax credit for businesses adding jobs in priority areas;
- A grant for residents buying homes within a minimum distance of their jobs; and
- Development right purchases for farm and environmental preservation (*ibid.*, pp. 274-275).

Informing, but not explicitly linked to smart growth, is the notion of *new urbanism*. 
Some might view *smart growth* simply as the latest wave in growth management (Weitz, 1999; Mitchell, 2004; Lee and Leigh, 2005, p. 338); yet it has also galvanized the broader public imagination. Leigh (2005) argues that planners must capitalize on this heightened attention, and participate in discussions and debates about what this term means. For, it is appropriated by diverse interests contesting its true meaning. Groups like the developer-driven National Association of Home Builders (1999 cited in Downs, 2001) tend to see *smart growth* as a way of satisfying new housing demand through higher density development surrounded by open space. Yet the term is also appropriated by environmentalists who may oppose specific projects advanced by *smart growth* developers. To clarify the range of interpretations, Downs identifies four sets of *smart growth* proponents:

1. Environmentalists and Anti-growth proponents who dislike suburban sprawl and focus mainly on a desire to reduce car dependence;
2. Pro-growth supporters, including developers, who care less about sprawl and more about removing development impediments and enhancing profitability;
3. Inner city advocates actively seeking redevelopment; and

Scholars like Berke (2002), however, argue that *smart growth* in its New Urbanist guise fails to achieve its sustainability promise because it essentially overlooks the regional scale. While the 2001 *Charter for New Urbanism* (the Charter) contains nine regional principles, there is no apparent link between these broad goals and the Charter’s finely detailed principles of neighbourhood and block design. For, despite regional goals including job
opportunities and economic development, the bulk of New Urbanist block design principles emphasize urban livability (i.e., attractively designed residential environments) and sense of place, rather than economic vitality (ibid., p. 26). This perspective is somewhat at odds with the adoption of state level smart growth policies, which have tended to involve a re-packaging of selected 1960s and 1970s growth management ideas with a new role for the state in the unfolding of growth management (Mitchell, 2004). Such state-level repackaging has also tended to occur in jurisdictions where there is a perceived environmental crisis, such as rapid habitat loss (ibid.).

Notwithstanding ongoing efforts to address growth management (whether explicitly under the Smart Growth banner or other catch phrases) recent research has identified considerable implementation difficulties and disappointing outcomes. Ingersoll (2006) suggests that sprawl is in fact inevitable, in part given its relationship to the “modern project of individual liberty” which advocates the right to home, work and shopping for all (p. 10). While not advocating that we live with all of sprawl’s results, Ingersoll suggests that we need to take a more realistic look at how our cities function in order to make better sense of how they work, and to recreate an important sense of public realm (see also Sieverts, 2003, Bruegmann, 2005; and Ellin, 2006).
Table 4.2 Comparison of Three Practice-Based Applications of Four Types of Spatial (Outcome) Theories for MGM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Major Defining Motif:</th>
<th>Polycentrism</th>
<th>Sustainable Planning</th>
<th>Smart Growth &amp; New Urbanism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Suburban centres give focus to decentralization, balancing its benefits and costs</td>
<td>Metropolis is a system (bioregionalist thought) and needs more integrated planning approaches</td>
<td>Popularization of MGM with fluid meanings. Implementation emphasizes higher densities &amp; mix of uses.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Relationship to Ward’s Four Categories of Outcome Theories for MGM:

1. Infill / Centralization
   - Less emphasis on central core; but to the extent that a designated node is not a greenfield site, some infill will be needed
   - Centralization is good if it prevents sprawl and if one can find a place for nature in the city (e.g. introduction of native and naturalized species in city parks; daylighting of creeks which were once culverted)
   - Higher development densities for reduced urban footprint
   - Emphasis on livability and sense of place
   - Compatible with sustainable planning integration of nature in city

2. Urban Containment
   - Greenbelts & other containment measures help focus growth in suburban centres
   - Greenbelts help contain growth as well as preserve biodiversity
   - Containment less critical if higher densities are encouraged as sprawl alternative

3. Balanced Growth
   - Informed by perceived benefits of growth (especially offices in 1970s and 1980s), including tax benefits. Desire to spread growth more evenly throughout metropolitan region
   - No explicit link to balanced growth inspired by Perroux’s growth poles, but seeks balance with nature, and accepts need for social and economic vitality.
   - Only type of balance emphasized tends to be within neighbourhoods (mixed uses), but can be compatible with polycentric notion of balanced growth.

4. Planned Decentralization
   - Strategic investments in anchor facilities draw new growth. May accompany disincentives for developing in metropolitan core
   - Nodes are useful if they reduce greenfield developments & encourage transit. But decentralization as sprawl is discouraged
   - Polycentrist notions of strategic investments at nodes can further smart growth (and vice versa)
   - Emphasis on achieving sufficient densities at nodes to support transit

Source: Author’s summary of literature cited in Sections 4.3 and 4.4
4.5 Governance

Another important variable which has affected the actual implementation of MGM outcome-related theories is the issue of governance. Governance is critical to MGM results because it determines whether the agency charged with plan implementation possesses both the legal authority and the financial resources it needs to shape growth in the desired manner.

At the metropolitan scale, several broad types of governance structure have been created to oversee MGM planning. Related to the issue of governance is the degree to which senior governments expect metropolitan agencies to conform to senior agency goals, or to submit their plans to a senior agency for review and/ or approval. Working largely from an American context, Bollens (1992) has described six broad approaches in this regard:

1) Functionally specific agencies, which focus largely on infrastructure provision, with examples including the Port of New York, the Southern California Water District, and Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority. MGM is influenced by such agencies to the extent that services they provide in ways which either further MGM goals (e.g. by promoting desired types of settlement concentration) or detract from them (e.g. promote an imbalance of greenfield development).

2) Federally-inspired regional agencies, such as MPOs, which were encouraged through federal legislation;

3) Regional Councils of Government (COGs), which are essentially voluntary regional associations without much legal authority. In the American context these may be the same as a MPO if the federal government agrees to designate a COG as such;
4) Public-private alliances trying to develop coordinated regional plans (e.g.: the Greater Houston Partnership);

5) Regionalism through state oversight / regulation, where local agencies comply with state goals for their broader region and

6) Comprehensive metropolitan government with centralized authority over certain kinds of land use decisions. Examples of this include Metropolitan Toronto (pre-1996); Portland, and Minneapolis-Saint Paul.

Drawing from Canadian examples, Hodge and Robinson describe four categories of metropolitan governance. Only two of these categories correspond with any of Bollens’s types. The first of these is the group Hodge and Robinson refer to as voluntary associations, to date found mainly in Alberta, and not unlike the COGs described by Bollens. The second consists of two-tier metropolitan government forms, where regional and local governments each have their own distinct spheres of local government function, as set out in senior government (provincial) statute. In Hodge and Robinson’s definition, the two-tier category includes the Metropolitan Corporation of Toronto which existed until 1998 (see Section 4.6.2 for further discussion regarding its dissolution). This two-tier group corresponds directly to Bollens’s category of comprehensive metropolitan government, where a centralized authority provides direction for certain land use decisions. The third category in Hodge and Robinson’s typology is the uni-city, epitomized by Winnipeg, where a single local agency was established through provincially-directed expansions. The final category is the special purpose authority which, they claim “is not, in fact, a true level of

37 E.g. the Alberta Capital Region Alliance, founded when the Edmonton Regional Planning Commission was abolished.
government and performs only limited functions for the metropolitan area, mainly the preparation of a metropolitan regional land use plan” (p. 250). They include Greater Vancouver in this group; although this approach tends to overlook the provision of water, sewer and drainage services also provided at the metropolitan level by the GVRD. Paget’s (1997) descriptor of the GVRD as a federated type of government appears more accurate, and a consensual form of government whose responsibilities are defined through choices made by municipal members.

Equally important to the issues of overall structure and decision-making are questions of scale. As several have observed, as metropolitan areas have grown, they have spread beyond the boundaries of the agencies charged with MGM and related functions (Hodge and Robinson, 2001; Sancton, 2006). In some instances this spread has lead to boundary extensions (e.g. where either a municipality or a regional authority expands to incorporate an urbanizing territory which was once unincorporated. But where urban agglomerations spill into adjacent regions, the issue can become more complicated. In the Canadian context, the latter trend has provided a rationale for senior (provincial) governments to restructure municipal boundaries, and to promote new inter-regional collaboration. The Toronto example described later in Section 4.6 below is an important example of this.

### 4.6 Examples of Recent MGM Plans – Los Angeles and Toronto

In Chapter One, I presented criteria as a starting point for determining whether MGM planning efforts might indicate communicative regionalism (refer back to Table 3.1). To further calibrate the criteria for use in my case study, I briefly review two recent examples:
one drawn from the United States (Los Angeles) and one from Canada (Toronto). Neither contemporary plan has been in place long enough to produce tangible outcomes. Moreover, because this calibration is largely heuristic, the sources for assessment consist solely of policy documents and related materials maintained by the regional planning agency for each example. These two examples are then discussed together with a view to raising additional questions for my case study.

### 4.6.1 Los Angeles

With its sprawling geography, ethnic diversity, history of race riots, and a regional population well over half the size of the entire nation of Canada, Los Angeles is arguably the most complex metropolitan region one could ever attempt to plan. Launched in part by a critique made in the 1950s by William H. Whyte, Los Angeles quickly “replaced the slums of Manchester as the ultimate urban horror, at least for intellectuals and academics living in the dense old industrial cities of the American Northeast” (Bruegmann, 2005, p. 122). Los Angeles’s complexity and reputation for sprawl is compounded by a deeply fragmented governance structure, aptly labeled by Soja (2000) as “an agglomeration of agglomerations” (p. 121), including 187 cities, six counties, a Tribal Government Regional Planning Board, and 14 sub-regional organizations (SCAG, 2009a). Complexity notwithstanding, Los Angeles has had a metropolitan planning organization (MPO) agency in operation since

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38 On first blush, Portland, Oregon might have seemed a more appropriate example to connect with a Greater Vancouver case study, given its success with growth management and its proximity to Vancouver and shared environmental consciousness. However, the Portland example was achieved through highly regulatory means, and would thus not be a good test example for communicative regionalism.

39 the Watts riots of the 1960s and the Rodney King riots of the late 1990s

40 Based on a Statistics Canada estimate for 2007 of 32 million people in Canada and a Los Angeles population estimate from the Southern California Association of Governments of 18 million people (SCAG, 2009a).
1965, established and funded through federal legislation. Even today the agency receives 81% of its funding from federal sources (SCAG, 2009b, p. 25).

How effective is Los Angeles at taking a coordinated approach to MGM? Some argue that it performs poorly. For example, Gainsborough (2001) questions the strength of commitment to the MPO form of regional cooperation which, she claims, has been “motivated by a sense that for local government this was a relatively low-cost alternative to what the state or federal government might otherwise impose on the form of regional governing structures” (p. 506). In fact, citing from interview research, Gainsborough observes that much of the Los Angeles regional agency’s efforts have focused on how to retain members, who are appointed from among each of the local government’s elected officials. As will be shown in Chapter 5 and throughout the Greater Vancouver case study, such a focus can arguably divert attention and resources away from the implementation of MGM goals.

The Los Angeles example is germane to an examination of criteria for communicative regionalism for two reasons. First, on one level the Los Angeles context helps illustrate the dangers of trying to apply an overly generalized process model, without considerable customization for place-specific conditions. After all, what reasonable person would dare expect a process that works for neighbourhood deliberations to work in a jurisdiction home to a population the size of a small country? Second, on another level, the Los Angeles example draws our attention to important opportunities for customization which might eventually help provide for more robust process models.
The specific exercise to be examined below is the creation of a Regional Comprehensive Plan for the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) -- a process which began in 2002 with work to develop a Growth Vision, led by a subcommittee of SCAG representatives. The SCAG Growth Vision was completed in 2004 (SCAG, 2004); and its principles were incorporated into the Regional Comprehensive Plan, adopted in 2008 (SCAG, 2008; SCAG 2009c).

The public consultation process to develop the SCAG growth vision was extensive. It began with a survey of residents\(^{41}\) for an overview of the general issues and concerns they believed faced the region. In the next step, SCAG conducted 13 public workshops, where participants had the chance to identify and explore long term future possibilities. Roughly 1,300 people attended these workshops altogether (SCAG, 2004, p. 24), held on a sub-regional basis, but with sub-regions defined in an overlapping and purpose-based (as opposed to jurisdictional) manner. Residents chose how they would handle projected future population and job growth, by making tradeoffs using chips that represented various land uses and densities of development (p. 26). They made and discussed these choices in groups of eight to twelve people, assigned to maximize the diversity of outlooks. Resource materials were also made available to assist with the deliberations (p. 25). One interesting feature of this process was the extent to which residents were willing to allocate higher density growth to their own places of residence, rather than trying to foist it on another part of the region (p. 28).

\(^{41}\) Documentation on this process did not specify whether the survey was conducted at random, self-selected or through both means; however, efforts were made to determine differences in responses according to sub-region (SCAG, 2004, p.24).
Following the workshops, SCAG staff mapped results using Geographic Information System (GIS) software, and used the compilation to develop a draft Growth Vision scenario (p. 26). Additional consultation to determine the suitability of the draft scenario included sub-regional review sessions and policy dialogues with key stakeholders. The Growth Vision culminated in four principles, with each principles supported by four or five planning strategies. For example, Principle #1 was “to improve mobility for all residents”; and one of the planning strategies to support that principle was “to encourage transit-oriented developments” (SCAG, 2004, p.6).

The vision was then brought forward into the development of the SCAG Regional Comprehensive Plan, which articulated more detailed actions to respond to the vision. An ongoing web presence was created especially for the visioning process, and maintained during plan formation, including a monthly calendar of events to alert residents to important meetings and discussions. While press releases on the SCAG website for 2007 (SCAG, 2009b) allude to the considerable degree of consultation also involved in developing the Regional Comprehensive Plan, details of consultation on the latter were not available from the website. They were, however, available for a companion piece, the Regional Transportation Plan (embodied in a 78-page document, see SCAG, 2007b). The latter technically would not have applied in developing the growth vision; however, it responds to new legal requirements established for MPOs in 2005. There may have been some consultation overlap which was not explicitly described. Consultation goals for the Regional Transportation Plan are shown in Table 4.3 below.
Table 4.3 Southern California Association of Governments Consultation Goals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Public Participation Plan Goals</th>
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<tr>
<td>The five primary goals of SCAG’s Public Participation Plan include:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Goal 1: Implement an open and ongoing participation process that ensures citizen, agency and interested party participation in, and input into, regional transportation planning and programming.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal 2: Provide full public access, information and input to key decisions in the regional transportation planning process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal 3: Disseminate clear, concise and up-to-date information to citizens, affected agencies and interested parties.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal 4: Provide timely responses to issues, concerns, and comments raised by the public regarding the development and implementation of regional transportation plans, programs, and projects. Ensure that the comments received are considered and incorporated into the deliberations regarding proposed plans and programs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal 5: Enhance the participation process including reaching out to those communities that have been underrepresented and/or underserved.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>


The final SCAG Regional Comprehensive Plan lacks the conventional legal status of municipal plans. It does contain policies and strategic initiatives, with areas of responsibility spelled out in a matrix at the conclusion of each topic (SCAG, 2008). Some might pronounce this document a continuation of the less effective voluntary tradition dating back to the 1960s, given that there is no apparent legal mechanism to enforce its provisions. For example, a key land use policy advocates that local governments “consider shared regional priorities, as outlined in the [vision], Regional Transportation Plan, and this Regional Comprehensive Plan, in determining their own development goals and drafting local plans”
This policy is then grouped in a category of items to be implemented as a best practice, rather than through legislative, or even coordinated measures.

However, there are at least more financial, and thus programmatic, resources now available to encourage local governments to follow through with this policy. For example, greater control over highway funding has provided more incentive for municipalities to take the regional level of government seriously. Moreover, the organization more generally has several resources directed specifically to land use, including a separate Compass Blueprint (2009) website (http://www.compassblueprint.org/) and planning facility, whose main purpose seems to be to educate and assist local governments through partnerships. Some of this assistance takes the form of partnering on studies and/or plans which directly achieve the regional goals. One example of this is the Long Beach Boulevard Corridor Study, undertaken jointly between Compass Blueprint and the City of Long Beach. Study components will include urban design recommendations, as well as more detailed provisions for achieving better, more comfortable multimodal transportation access within the corridor, and a study of the value added from more pedestrian and transit-friendly streetscapes to new development (Compass Blueprint, 2009). These two types of resource speak to Margerum’s urging that communicative planning efforts pay attention to “how to integrate a range of policy responses to address common goals” (2002, p. 189).

A final aspect of interest with this plan is the way in which it is to be implemented: through additional stakeholder discussions and working groups on implementation matters; by considering the plan’s policies with deliberations on the annual work plan budget, and
providing guidance to local governments as they seek to implement the plan (SCAG, 2008, p. 144).

So how would this plan stack up against the criteria I have set for assessing communicative regionalism? It would appear from the materials reviewed that the plan displays evidence of communicative regionalism in several respects. First, it arguably facilitated the exchange of multiple types of information (criterion #1) by providing more traditional data as well as by forcing more values-based discussions through the land use/ density chip allocation process, and through deliberate attempts to mix different viewpoints in each public discussion group (meeting both criteria #1 and #3). Such mixed discussion was also structured to provide for consensus to the greatest extent possible (criterion #6). There is little information on how that occurred in either vision or plan development; however, given the scope of the public process, one might presume that dialogues with other key stakeholders were equally accessible and creative. (This presumption gains additional weight from the extensive consultation documented in the 78-page public participation plan for developing the Regional Transit Plan—see SCAG, 2007b).

With criterion #2, one could make a similar argument that the plan effectively provided for a strong degree of planning facilitation, evident in the care with which the public consultation program was designed, and in the GIS mapping and elaborate model building that went into scenario refinement (see SCAG, 2004, p. 5). While the plan has only been recently adopted, it also appears that there is every intention to continue a strong degree of stakeholder participation in implementation. Of course this will likely be subject to annual budget
decisions which, in the current climate of an economic recession (New York Times, 2008),
could end up significantly constrained.

In terms of criteria #4 and #5 (stakeholder implementation involvement and ongoing cultural
shifts from the process), one outcome suggests that this may be occurring in Los Angeles.
The new compass blueprint planning facility and its ability to partner (in delivering local
planning initiatives that support MGM goals) provides an example of resources being made
available to actively enable stakeholder collaboration in implementation as well as the
evolution of a new way of working together between municipalities and the MPO.

While nothing can yet be said about how effective its outcomes will be, the SCAG Regional
Comprehensive Plan for what is essentially the Los Angeles conurbation appears to present a
generally solid example of communicative regionalism, as inferred by the literature and by
my criteria. Of course, a more thorough exploration of the way, and degrees to which,
communicative regionalism has occurred would need to assess the perspectives of the various
stakeholders with interests in this process. Nonetheless, in calibrating the indicators in Table
3.1, the Los Angeles example is instructive for the more detailed discussion of the Greater
Vancouver case to follow.
4.6.2 Toronto

The second example is the Canadian urban agglomeration of Toronto. As a Census Metropolitan Area (CMA), it functionally consists today of a large metropolitan city, surrounded by four other large suburban regions, with the latter embodying fourteen municipalities (Filion, 2000; Sancton, 2006). Roughly 5.1 million people live in the Toronto CMA (Statistics Canada, 2007a), compared with Greater Vancouver’s 2.1 million. It is Canada’s largest and most economically dominant city, leading many Canadians outside this area to sarcastically label it “The Centre of the Universe”. Toronto is also part of a larger conurbation surrounding the shores of Lake Ontario, extending from Peterborough to the northeast to Hamilton and Niagara to the southwest. This conurbation, known as the Greater Golden Horseshoe, was home to 8.1 million in 2006 (Statistics Canada, 2007b).

Toronto was once characterized by a particularly innovative form of metropolitan government established in 1953, following a two-tier governance structure. As Hodge and Robinson (2001) explain, two-tier metropolitan agencies typically include a federation of lower-tier member municipalities, each possessing their own local responsibilities. The upper tier or metropolitan level of the structure is responsible for specific services shared across the metropolitan area. Metropolitan service provision in the Toronto case was governed by the upper tier’s Metropolitan Council, comprised of directly elected politicians. Most of the latter also held a municipal office, but still had to be chosen by voters for their metropolitan roles).

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42 A Census Metropolitan Area in Canada is defined for statistical purposes as “one or more adjacent municipalities situated around a major urban core. To form a census metropolitan area, the urban core must have a population of at least 100,000” (Statistics Canada 2002).
Until its dissolution in the mid-1990s, Metropolitan Toronto possessed the ability to guide land uses through broad designations (but not zoning) to which municipalities were legally obliged to comply under senior (provincial) government statute. At the same time, Metropolitan Toronto possessed other important complementary functions, including control over transit (the Toronto Transit Commission) and some major highways; parks and green belts; and public sanitation (Filion, 2000).

From the early 1950s to the mid 1990s, the metropolitan population nearly tripled, reaching 4.3 million in 1996\(^{43}\) (Statistics Canada, 1997). A streetcar network, linked with an extensive subway system begun in the 1950s and 1960s helped ensure a large degree of concentration in Toronto’s urban core—a concentration that has continued to the present day, encouraged by successive waves of immigration, combined with federal support for inner city rehabilitation and renovation beginning in the 1970s (Filion, 2000). An innovative system of tax-pooling helped provide for uniform services across Metropolitan Toronto, contrasting with the declining service levels which often exacerbated the hollowing out of many major US cities (Frisken et al., 1997). But at the same time, an even greater degree of deconcentration occurred through concurrent suburban development, enabled by highway construction projects; new large scale public housing projects built on less expensive land further from the metropolitan core; and consumer preferences for suburban lifestyles (see Filion for more extensive discussion).

\(^{43}\) In 1951 Toronto’s population was 1.1 million (Dominion Bureau of Statistics, 1953).
By 1995 this suburban momentum, combined with fiscally conservative voter attitudes and disillusionment with the previous provincial administration, brought the Ontario Conservative Party to power. The Conservative government reduced provincial funding available for new transit and social housing, while also largely reducing support for regional planning (ibid.). In 1998, the Province amalgamated the six\textsuperscript{44} municipalities which had participated in the metropolitan government, and eradicated the latter. At the same time, the Province recognized the growing importance of regions directly outside of Toronto’s boundaries; and so in 1999 established a coordinating agency known as the Greater Toronto Services Board (Ontario, 1998), which was later eliminated in 2001 due to ineffectiveness (Ontario, 2001). While this board provided for coordination of services like infrastructure, economic development, and the GO commuter train system, it did not at that time include any land use coordination goals.

In 2003, however, Ontario’s Conservative provincial government was replaced with a Liberal government, which had a different outlook on MGM and provincial involvement. In 2004 the Province of Ontario released a 2004 discussion paper asking local governments and the public at large to provide feedback on proposals for developing a new provincial plan to provide broad growth management direction for the Golden Horseshoe (Ontario, 2004). The discussion paper was published on the web (ibid.), and was eventually discussed at eight public meetings attended by 1,600 people (Ontario, 2005). Compared with the Los Angeles example, the senior government chose to play a much stronger role in creating what is

\textsuperscript{44} Initially these had been 21 separate local governments in the 1950s, but these were amalgamated prior to 1998 (Hodge and Robinson, 2001).
arguably a metropolitan growth strategy—justifying this decision by virtue of requests in this regard from local governments and citizens (Ontario, 2004, p. 2).

Once the draft plan was prepared, comments were again received and a second draft was prepared to reflect those comments. The second draft also acknowledged the formal adoption of the Province’s Place to Grow Act, which spelled out the relationship between the plan and those municipalities included in the Greater Golden Horseshoe. Before the plan was finally completed, the act gave a clear signal to local governments that their land use and other related planning decisions would need to conform to the forthcoming plan within three years. It also forewarned that if compliance did not occur, the local government’s plan could be changed to accord with the provincial plan (Ontario, 2006a).

The final provincial growth plan was positioned as “the shared vision of the Province, the municipalities of the Greater Golden Horseshoe Area, and its residents” (Ontario, 2006b, p. 5). The plan leads off with a vision, but provides clear direction through six guiding principles. Three of the latter are clearly linked to a desired spatial form for the conurbation; one relates to the importance of economic development; and the last two are more process-based (recognition of the diversity of communities within the region, and a commitment to collaborative, multi-agency implementation (ibid., p.10). It also includes a set of population and employment forecasts which must be used by all municipalities meeting particular criteria, as well as targets for intensification in general. Ultimately there are minimum targets for specific nodes known as urban growth centres, and for greenfield sites to increase the likelihood of new development being built at transit-supportive densities (op cit; see also Ontario, 2006c).
So how could the Province of Ontario’s Greater Golden Horseshoe Plan rate against the criteria for communicative regionalism? The plan displayed potential elements of the latter approach; yet on first blush it also displayed potential elements of a more technocratic approach.

In terms of the first criterion (information), the launch of the process with a discussion paper and provision of multiple technical reports suggests that the plan development process has achieved at least some transparency; and the clearly written technical briefs have likely provided for a reasonable degree of stakeholder empowerment to the degree that the briefs clarify what to expect from the process and how to influence it. An apparently comprehensive scope of information was considered; and the plan development process was somewhat iterative, given that the final plan was developed only after comments on earlier versions had been received. This suggests some positive indication of meeting criterion #1. Yet there is no evidence of how multiple, non-objective forms of information were considered, or whether they were accepted at all. Such information could have included the more values-based views of residents, maps of special places, or traditional knowledge held by local First Nations. In the absence of such information, one could conclude that criterion #1 was only partly met.

For criterion #2 (relating to the role of planner as facilitator), my preliminary assessment is again that performance is mixed. Hosting workshops, and revising drafts based on comments received, both provide evidence of deliberation –and would also suggest some acceptance of
a facilitation role by provincial staff and for their delegates. Yet it is also clear that planners have played important technocratic roles, as well as potentially political influence roles (to use Innes and Gruber’s 2005 terms) in this process, particularly in coordinating the plan with companion pieces of legislation and through the development of mandatory minimum targets for intensification. The question remains, however: to what extent is such work a sign of these other styles a bad thing, particularly if it enables what is otherwise a communicatively-derived public will to be carried out? For example, it may be that targets were negotiated with local governments, rather than simply imposed upon them. The plan’s reference to a need for updating these targets at least every five years in consultation with municipalities (Ontario, 2008, p. 13) at least implies the possibility of a more deliberative approach during initial development. A satisfactory response to this question would likely need interview and in-depth archival research. This question also suggests a need for further and more nuanced exploration, within the context of communicative or post-communicative regionalism, of the role that technical information and knowledge can play in support of democratic and transformative aims.

In terms of criterion #3 (stakeholder participation in plan development), provision for dialogue was made through the notice provided by the 2004 discussion paper and subsequent discussion workshops, as well as the circulation of two drafts for further review and comment prior to the plan’s finalization. Materials on the Ontario government’s website do not describe whether any modeling or other innovative discussion tools were used to enhance the level of stakeholder understanding during deliberation at the initial workshops. Here again, interviews and more archival research might shed more light on this matter.
For the final criterion (#4 – stakeholder involvement in plan implementation) there is a fairly strong and clear indication of the future role that local governments are expected to play. So long as the broad designations and targets of the provincial plan are adhered to, there remains significant local government scope for discretion. There is also reference to new legislative tools which will make it easier for local governments (e.g. a revamp of development charges provisions in planning legislation) to appropriately service new development and pay for other needed amenities. The potential for a reasonable amount of dialogue between provincial and municipal authorities during implementation seems strong; but there is no explicit provision for ongoing consultation with the general public.

**Discussion**

In comparing recent MGM plans for Los Angeles and Toronto, one might be tempted to initially conclude, based on their comparative performance in the six indicators of communicative regionalism (listed in Table 3.1) that: a more comprehensive process was used in creating the Los Angeles plan (vs. the Toronto plan); and the Los Angeles plan is therefore a better one. Yet such a conclusion would be simplistic for two reasons.

First, it would fail to consider the extent to which stakeholder values and desires were actually embodied in the final plans. The Ontario government plan appeared to involve less direct consultation between the Province and the general public compared with the regional planning authority (SCAG) and the public in the Los Angeles case; yet supporting documents and the plan itself both infer considerable consultation with local governments. And it would
not be unreasonable for the Province to assume that input from affected local governments might convey public values derived through other planning processes, which themselves may have embodied considerable stakeholder deliberation. Such deliberation would be particularly likely in an Ontario context where a stakeholder can appeal any planning decision to the Ontario Municipal Board, which holds formal hearings when a local government, developer or citizen wishes to appeal a local government land use decisions (see OMB, 2004 for further detail). Moreover, the 2004 discussion brief clearly states that, in creating a provincial plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, the Province is responding to the demands of local governments and the public at large (Ontario, 2004, page a and p. 2).

Thus, to the extent that a senior government inserts itself directly into MGM planning, it may be necessary to consider different indicators of deliberative success than one might see, for example, in a neighbourhood process addressing issues of a more municipal scale. It might also be important to place the senior government’s role into the existing culture of senior-local relationships in a particular place. Los Angeles has had a history of fragmented local government with a strong local culture and weak state involvement in local affairs. Conversely, at least the core of the Greater Golden Horseshoe (the very prominent Toronto CMA) has had more than a half-century history of reasonably effective, if imperfect, metropolitan government with some clear authority for structuring more localized land use decisions. In the latter context, residents might consider a provincial plan that at least consulted well with municipal authorities more capable of meeting their needs than residents with a different history of senior-local relations.
Second, to conclude the Los Angeles (SCAG) plan was more communicative, and thus the better plan, would also be simplistic for failing to consider the extent to which stakeholder values and desires will be reflected in the implementation of those plans. Given the number of plan recommendations in the SCAG plan which are highly contingent upon the skills and goodwill of local governments—without any corresponding compliance mechanisms or agreements—the implementation of those provisions is by no means assured. For example, a policy for local governments’ land use plans to accord with the regional vision, could have been supported by collaboratively developed memoranda of understanding between the local governments and region—and the latter might have been another means of providing for implementation with better chances for success. Conversely, given the concurrent development of the Greater Horseshoe Plan with clear enforceability mechanisms, together with a revamp of overall provincial planning legislation, and the setting of supportive provincial infrastructure priorities, it would appear that there is a strong provincial political will to implement the plan. So to the extent that it reflects stakeholder values (something which the analysis here has not been able to confirm), those values may see a strong chance of being realized. But to be fair, with a long history of metropolitan governance (at least within the core part of the Golden Horseshoe, within the boundaries governed by the old Metropolitan Toronto), the various stakeholders in the Toronto case may have already developed a certain level of comfort with MGM that the Los Angeles stakeholders do not yet possess. The latter observation speaks to Healey’s and Innes’s understanding of the value of shared culture and repertoires for action. Here again, a more in-depth analysis might examine the extent to which the local planning culture has shaped plan recommendations
(and implementation potential), and the extent to which the plan itself might then impact local culture over time.

My point in the above comparison and discussion is not to make a definitive judgment of the above two plans—particularly not in the absence of further supporting detail. Rather, the above examples provide a helpful means of demonstrating that the indicators derived from communicative planning literature alone may not tell enough of the story. The local governance culture and history are important variables which affect the level of stakeholder participation in plan development and implementation. Moreover, the scale of the process (or perhaps most accurately, the scale of the agency leading the process) may significantly inform the mechanisms for seeking stakeholder input. My Greater Vancouver case study is thus intended to both illustrate this point more clearly, and suggest some more constructive ways of better assessing the deliberative aspects of MGM planning processes (as well as the latter’s outcome aspects).

4.7 Summing Up

The issue of how planning is undertaken (by whom, for what reasons, and using what knowledge), or planning process, is arguably embodied (although not exclusively) in the knowledge dimension of Friedmann’s definition of planning as the application of knowledge to action (1987). The main focus of this dissertation is to better understand the strengths and weaknesses of a particular process theory (applied to MGM planning in many North American jurisdictions) known as communicative regionalism. But the dissertation’s interest in process has also been influenced by the perception of a “disconnect” or gap between
processes and the outcomes they are purporting to help foster (i.e., the action dimension of Friedmann’s definition). In essence, the dissertation is ultimately hoping to advance our understanding of planning theory in ways which will better integrate the knowledge and action dimensions of planning.

While Chapter 2 provided further detail on the origins, works, and critiques associated with the process being studied (communicative regionalism), Chapter 4 has focused to a large extent on the desired outcomes or recommendations for actions which have also played a role in MGM activities. Chapter 4 began with a discussion of early thinking about outcomes and led to a discussion of programs of actions intended to achieve those outcomes. Such programs included MGM theories for infill / concentration; urban containment; balanced growth; and planned decentralization. In more recent years, new models which cut across and repackaged these theories have been advanced, including agendas for polycentric decentralization, environmentally sustainable urban planning, and smart growth. Beyond these theories, however, there are also theories regarding the appropriate form of governance arrangements for structuring MGM planning activities, which Chapter Three briefly reviewed.

As a means of better understanding the relationship between both the process and outcome theories discussed in Chapters 2 and 4, the penultimate section (Section 4.6) of this chapter provided a review of two examples of recent MGM planning efforts, undertaken respectively in the Los Angeles and Toronto regions. In addition to providing concrete examples, Section 4.6 provided an opportunity to calibrate the criteria (advanced in Chapter 3) for determining
whether or not MGM planning efforts might indicate communicative regionalism. Key findings from this calibration exercise included the following:

- Evidence (from both examples) that information gathering and sharing involving the public and other stakeholders may have become a standard component of MGM exercises, but with results remaining varied in terms of the types of information collected and valued;
- The ongoing importance of technocratic planning activities from both examples, in supporting the more overtly communicative exercises undertaken in a planning process (e.g. modeling results of public workshops) and in ensuring that any legal requirements framing plan development are in fact met;
- The persistence of tensions between processes which stress deliberative over representative forms of democracy, which may also reflect distinctions in local planning cultures and histories. The latter will in turn impact citizens’ degree of willingness to tolerate less involved forms of direct consultation in processes where greater reliance is placed on representative democracy to satisfactorily provide for the public interest; and
- The suggestion that greater deliberation is not necessarily associated with the ease or likelihood of satisfactory implementation.
Chapter 5 – Provincial and Regional Relations in MGM Planning in Greater Vancouver

My preliminary testing of two contemporary MGM planning exercises suggested that communicative regionalism may contain gaps which, at best, should be reformulated in a more rigorous manner through the exploration of new research questions and, at worst to be replaced by a successor theory. For a more robust test of this assumption (one which considers both process and outcome goals) Chapter 5 and the remaining chapters in the dissertation provide a detailed grounding in case study research. This chapter focuses on a macro-scale overview of senior government and regional agency relationships relevant to the case study, including some assessment of the degree of communicative regionalism present during the study period, particularly as manifest in GVRD plans and regional-provincial relations.

But before delving into a discussion of relationships and activities of the Province and the GVRD, it is worth elaborating on the broader Canadian governance context. Canada is structured as a federal system of government, where powers are distributed between federal and provincial levels of government through the Canadian Constitution. Under the Constitution, responsibilities for land use planning and managing the affairs of local governments are the purview of the provincial government. In essence, local governments do not possess independent status under the Canadian Constitution. A significant reason for this lack of separate constitutional status lies with the colonial origins of Canadian local governments, since the latter were created before confederation to provide basic services to further British colonial (as opposed to civic) interests (Lazar and Seal, 2005). This means
that municipal and regional levels of government may only act in accordance with powers given to them in provincial legislation (Paget, 1997, p. 4).

Hence, within the Greater Vancouver context, it is the 1996 British Columbia Local Government Act (LGA) —and its predecessor the British Columbia Municipal Act, along with the more recently adopted Community Charter (2003)— which have provided clear parameters for the planning activities of both the regional government (i.e., Greater Vancouver) and nearly all of its municipalities such as the City of Burnaby (British Columbia, 1996 and 2003). The exception to this is the City of Vancouver, which has its own charter as an alternative to the LGA. Important changes to this provincial legislation which have a bearing on MGM and related activities will be discussed throughout this chapter.

At a broad level, this legislation today provides municipalities with the power to create their own zoning bylaws and to create their own land use plans for spelling out desired longer term uses for local sites. But for little over a decade, the regional level of government was not only able, but actually required, to provide legally enforceable plans for the longer term land uses of sites; and any changes in municipal zoning were required to conform to those plan designations. As will be described later in this chapter, such powers were removed in 1983 and since then regional land use plans have been dependent —at least initially— on municipal agreement to the broad land use designations they contain. Regional districts also

45 In this respect, Vancouver is not unlike selected other Canadian cities such as Montreal and Saint John in having its own charter. As of 2005 Toronto did not have its own charter, although it has been lobbying the Ontario government for many years to this effect (Lazar and Seal, 2005). Eventually one took effect on January 1, 2007 with the passing of the City of Toronto Act, 2006 (Ontario, 2007)

46 These are equivalent to the U.S. concept of a zoning ordinance.
tend to provide large infrastructure (e.g. sewage treatment plants, water reservoirs and treatment facilities), but even this is based on municipal agreement. The region in this case study (the GVRD) has nearly a century-long history of collaboration in this regard, to the extent that member municipalities are now effectively bound to this regional system; however, other regional districts in the province have a much shallower degree of inter-municipal cooperation in this regard. This differential approach to regional service provision is allowed in the LGA (see Parts 15 and 24).

5.1 MGM Foundations in Greater Vancouver: Settlement to 1965

The area now comprising Vancouver’s metropolitan area was initially inhabited by First Nations peoples, including the Musqueam, Squamish, Katzie, Kwantlen, Semiahmoo, Tsleil-Waututh, and Tsawwassen bands. Early European encounters with the territory occurred in the late 18th Century, beginning with Spanish exploration off Point Grey, and followed by Captain George Vancouver’s 1792 entry into Burrard Inlet. It took several decades for European settlers to make their homes in the area; and at that time the region was developed as several distinct settlements. The first of these was Fort Langley, established along the shore of the Fraser River in 1827. The latter was followed by Queensborough, later renamed as New Westminster and proclaimed the capital of British Columbia in 1859 (until 1871 when the City of Victoria officially replaced it as the capital). These settlements predated the 1867 establishment of Canada as a nation, and the 1871 entry of British Columbia into the Canadian confederation. The area which today forms the central City of Vancouver was not

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47 Burrard Inlet forms the northern border of the contemporary city’s central business district, and provides entry to the Port of Vancouver.
established until 1870, when it was first named Granville (1870) and given the nickname of “Gastown”.

*Figure 5.1 Early Settlement Points in Metro Vancouver*

*Created by Anders Wong on the author’s behalf.*

Collaboration between the municipalities comprising what is now Greater Vancouver began in 1914, with sewer and drainage service provision for Vancouver, Burnaby, Port Moody, Coquitlam, North Vancouver and West Vancouver through a special purpose board legally
recognized by provincial legislation\(^{48}\) (Harcourt \textit{et al.}, 2007; see also Chadwick, 2002, p. 35). By 1936 land use planning services were being actively considered, with the formation of a citizens’ group known as the Lower Mainland\(^{49}\) Regional Planning Association. But in light of its lack of legal status and money, the association eventually disbanded during World War II (Christopherson, 2001, p. 59). Thus, for metropolitan planning to have any meaning, it first needed a foundation for land use guidance and control. Under the Canadian federal system, that foundation needed to be set by provincial statute.

### 5.1.1 Provincial Foundations for MGM to 1965

The parameters for regulating land use had been established in British Columbia with the 1925 adoption of the \textit{British Columbia Town Planning Act}, which allowed, but did not require, the use of zoning and land use designation tools by municipal governments (Gunton, 1981; Wolf, 1995). (See Figure 5.1 on page 149 for full timeline of provincial and regional actions.) Yet, despite the existence of formal land use powers, and notwithstanding a growing interest in regional planning in the 1930s, metropolitan planning was not explicitly enabled by provincial legislation until 1948, when the Lower Mainland Regional Planning Board (LMRPB) was created along with five other planning boards in the province, via an amendment to the 1925 \textit{Town Planning Act} (Corke, 1983, p. 98). This board was comprised of elected officials from existing local governments, appointed by the local governments themselves. As noted in Chapter 3, this post-war implementation of MGM principles was

\(^{48}\) Followed in 1924 by the Greater Vancouver Water District.

\(^{49}\) The term \textit{Lower Mainland} is frequently used to describe Greater Vancouver and the adjacent lands in south-western BC which extend beyond its administrative boundaries, but which are functionally linked in many respects. The word “mainland” specifically refers to its relation to the provincial capital of Victoria, which sits on an island to the west of Vancouver.
not uncommon in many large North American and British urban regions. But in the case of Greater Vancouver, more than just the cessation of hostilities and corresponding construction wave were required to bring about MGM.

It became apparent that there was a need for region-wide flood control after a huge spring flood earlier in 1948 along the Fraser River, a large estuarine water body, extending well beyond the region’s confines, but effectively splitting Greater Vancouver into north and south halves. This flood resulted in extensive damage to many parts of the area now within Greater Vancouver and creating a state of emergency. It thus took the flood and the problems it exposed to build upon earlier collaboration for drainage and water services and to catalyze the forces which had already been lobbying for regional planning in British Columbia, including the local chapter of the Community Planning Association of Canada (and the Lower Mainland Regional Planning Association) (Harcourt et al., 2007). The Province’s act to enable the LMRPB was in large part a response to locally-expressed needs. But this legislative change also owed much to the efforts of Tom MacDonald, who was both passionate about planning and well-connected politically at provincial levels (Wilson, 2000, cited in Chadwick, p. 39)

Relative to other Canadian provinces, British Columbia’s local governments have long had an independent ethos, largely given the province’s populist culture (Paget, 1997). This has resulted in a tradition of relationships embodying some degree of provincial responsiveness, rather than top-down direction, during much of the 20th and early 21st centuries. This tradition has occurred notwithstanding municipalities’ constitutionally subservient status.
At its formation, the new LMRPB’s territory included lands within the current scope of Greater Vancouver, but also extended much further eastward through the Fraser Valley up to Hope (approximately 124 km from the City of Vancouver). At this point in time, planning capacity was in short supply – not just at the metropolitan scale, but even at city levels:

_The kingpin on the staff side was usually the municipal clerk... who had probably started in a lowly clerical post and had worked his way up over the years... There were [practically] no ‘planners’.... The strongest profession as such was engineering, and the municipal engineer, if there was one, was usually the other ‘power’ in the hall...”_ (Interview with Jim Wilson, 1988, pp. 21-22 in Harcourt et al., 2007).

While regional planning in British Columbia began in the Vancouver area, regional planning powers were eventually extended throughout the province. The current system of regional governance in the province took shape under an administration led by William Andrew Cecil Bennett50 (1953-1972). Bennett was a hardware store owner from the interior of the province – an area which was largely rural and recreational in character (as opposed to urban) at the time. His Social Credit administration purportedly took a free-enterprise approach to government, but oversaw the development of a solid base of welfare-state programs and accepted the value of government intervention in economic and social policy matters. As one interviewee notes, “the [WAC] Bennett government was free enterprise, but in many ways it was extremely forward-looking in terms of what it did in the 1950s”. (Interviewee C; see also Prince, 1996, especially pp. 250-254 for further discussion of how and why this occurred.)

50 In popular reference he was frequently known as “Wacky” Bennet, as a play on his first three initials, and later to distinguish him from a son with the same first name who also became premier.
An important example of WAC Bennett’s interventionist approach was the creation of the British Columbia Hydro and Power Authority (BC Hydro), which would play an ongoing role in Greater Vancouver’s MGM implementation. Today, BC Hydro is one of Canada’s largest electric utilities, with over 4,000 employees as of 2005 (BC Hydro, 2008a) and nearly $4 billion in annual revenue in 2005 (BC Hydro, 2008b). Charged with the generation and transmission of hydroelectric power for almost the entire province, as a crown corporation, BC Hydro’s authority and responsibilities are spelled out in distinct provincial legislation (Hydro and Power Authority Act, RSBC 1996). In this capacity, BC Hydro has the power to create dams and flood lands to generate power; and it also has the general ability to “acquire, maintain, develop, replace, alter, administer, manage, operate and dispose of property” (Hydro and Power Authority Act, RSBC, 1996, S. 12 (1)). Moreover, it has the powers of expropriation, with the contemporary statement of those parameters made in the BC Expropriation Act (British Columbia, 2009c).

The model for British Columbia crown corporations has come from Canadian federal crown corporations (in turn modelled after United Kingdom crown corporations). While established as early as the 19th C., Canadian federal crown corporations began to proliferate during WWII, as many corporations were established to deal with munitions, financial, communications, and transportation needs (Balls, 1953, p. 128). Under the 1951 federal Financial Administration Act, federal crown corporations were classified into three different categories: departmental corporations, which effectively provide services of a government

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51 Some local governments and regions that have their own electrical utilities which pre-date the formation of BC Hydro, such as the City of New Westminster (New Westminster, 2009).
nature and take day-to-day ministerial direction; agency corporations, which conduct trade or provide services of a quasi-commercial nature and are subject to somewhat less ministerial control than departmental crown corporations; and proprietary corporations, which are expected to be financial self-sufficient in supplying goods or services to the public. For the latter type of crown corporation, the minister responsible has typically held the level of influence that a major shareholder in a private corporation might have (Balls, 1953, pp. 130-131). Under its legislation, BC Hydro is specifically described as an agency crown corporation.

BC Hydro’s influences on Greater Vancouver’s MGM implementation would come partly through the corporation’s earlier role in transit service provision—a role which it no longer plays—and partly through its role as a landowner, which arose from that earlier transit role. In 1897, one of its predecessor organizations, the BC Electric Railway Company (then a private business) was formed to provide electric tram service within Vancouver and its inner suburbs. The company was then expropriated by the Province in 1962 and converted to a crown corporation eventually renamed BC Hydro. BC Hydro continued to provide regional transit service from 1962 to 1980. Thus, to a large extent, BC Hydro’s role has involved the provision of transit services, which shape and enable the development of specific activity nodes along transit lines.52 (This role will become apparent in the development of two of the three nodes.)

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52 But, as will be demonstrated in the case of both the Big Bend and Metrotown employment nodes, its influence has also been felt as the owner of lands which eventually became surplus to its operations.
In terms of the overall MGM framework, however, the first major step by the Province in creating the regional governance system occurred in 1965, when the Municipal Act was amended to create a province-wide system of regional districts, thus extending regional planning well beyond the Lower Mainland (British Columbia, 1971). Planning powers for the new regional districts were also provided that year. As structured by provincial legislation, regional districts were intended to be (and remain today) a federated system, described by Paget as “confederations of municipalities” (1995p. 4). This system meant that regional districts would not be a superior order of government – rather, they were (and still are today) led by a board of political representatives appointed on a proportional basis\(^{53}\) by member municipalities. At the same time, however, in areas which had small population bases and were unincorporated, regional districts served the secondary function of providing municipal services to those areas, including planning services, on a fee-for-service basis.

Regional districts would also receive funding from member municipalities for services provided (for example, a smaller municipality might have its own water delivery system but still need to contract with the regional district for planning services). Thus, regional districts’ link with municipalities would be a direct and a dependent one. Richard Taylor, current Executive Director of the Union of British Columbia Municipalities\(^{54}\) (UBCM) explains the region’s dependence in these terms: “‘The GVRD is not the fourth level of government. The regional district is there because of and for its municipal members. The whole notion of

\(^{53}\) Relative to population size

\(^{54}\) The UBCM is an association of elected officials from across the province. Since the creation of the Community Charter in 2003, the Province has formally recognized its political significance, by enshrining a duty to consult the UBCM on certain changes to legislation impacting municipalities (British Columbia,).
appointing a board comprised of elected officials from member municipalities instead of electing a board reinforces that’’” (pp. 178-179 in Harcourt et al., 2007).

As will be shown later, British Columbia regional districts today have partially (although not completely) voluntary powers in terms of municipal adherence to regional growth strategies. However, they differ from other voluntary regional agencies, such as American MPO / Councils of Governments model, in that the regional districts enjoy powers to make laws and regulations, and to collect taxes (Paget, 1995). As noted above, they also possess the power to make legal agreements with member municipalities around any number of topics, ranging from service provision to land use (British Columbia, 1996, see Part 24, Division 4).

The creation of the new regional district system in the 1960s was not significantly communicative or collaborative in the sense understood today by communicative planning theory. Such an approach would simply not have been possible with a provincial administration as highly centralized as WAC Bennett’s. As an illustration of this centralization, for much of his term in office Bennett held the position of Minister of Finance himself –and usually the Premier does not hold another Cabinet portfolio (Prince, 1996, p. 250). Besides being infeasible, it is likely that a communicative approach would not have seemed necessary at that time. With its young settlement history, abundant resources, and relatively small population base, regional governance decisions in WAC Bennett’s day would have been relatively non-complex in comparison to today’s context. As DeRoo’s (2001) work suggests, given their time- and labour-intensive nature, communicative processes may be more appropriate for situations of higher, rather than low complexity.
Notwithstanding Bennett’s centralized approach, provincial staff within the system were quite capable of recognizing and benefiting from local knowledge — translating it into something of benefit for the Province’s own broader scope of interests.

Successful incorporation of local knowledge requires translators who make particular effort to appreciate and address the needs of key power holders within their organizations (Yanow, 2004). This notion of translation helps bridge gaps between: the universalized and/or scientific forms of knowledge (or even organization-specific forms of local knowledge) which might direct an organization’s actions; and local knowledge held by the agency’s most immediate point of contact with the outside world. Effective translation requires that a translator be familiar with three distinct cultures: the translator’s own professional culture of practice; the culture of the translator’s larger organization (and power-brokers); and that of the outsiders (citizens or agencies) who helped generate the local knowledge through the interaction with that translator (Yanow, 2004). Given the strongly rural, populist and free-enterprise administration which then prevailed, a particularly shrewd translator may have helped to sell Provincial politicians on a “big city” notion like regional planning, by adeptly demonstrating how it could fulfill a range of Provincial interests – including interests of benefit to communities geographically remote from the Lower Mainland.

The original translators who worked for the Province when the system of regional districts was initially developed are long gone. But one interviewee currently employed by the Province provides an insight into factors in the translation process. He explains that, while the regional district system sought much broader benefits, the political rationale used to
justify this new system in terms of its ability to provide better services to the constituents of provincial politicians:

Prior to regional districts, rural areas of the province had to rely on their MLAs\textsuperscript{55} to be their voice for change, for servicing, for whatever problem in government ... so that put a lot of pressure on one MLA --for a huge part of the province in some cases—to try and reflect the rural issues. And [rural services were] ... very chaotic with individual service boards, improvement districts, and very small water utilities and fire districts... (Interviewee A, 2008)

Of particular importance was the hope that regional districts could make it more cost effective to fund new hospitals, in part from a more local tax base. This feature would have made it particularly attractive to the Premier at the time, who had campaigned for election on the basis of lowering hospital insurance premiums (Raynor, p. 183).

Another interviewee suggests that the individual serving as Minister of Municipal Affairs at the time also played a role in bringing the regional district system to fruition. Despite WAC Bennett’s highly controlling nature, he had a high degree of trust in Dan Campbell, his Minister of Municipal Affairs from the early 1960s to 1973:

\textit{[Campbell] was a very strong and aggressive Minister. He was aggressive with municipalities, was very outspoken in public, and apparently had an incredible ability to influence the Premier. I think the Premier saw him most like his—like father-son—Campbell was quite pugnacious and Bennett was pugnacious, so the two of them kind of hit it off.} (Interviewee B, 2008)

While Campbell did not come up with the idea for regional districts and regional planning, he was at least receptive to it; and his deputy Everett Brown and his staff came up with the idea and made an effective case for it (Interviewee B; see also Chadwick, 2002, pp. 48-50).

\textsuperscript{55} In BC, a MLA or Member of the Legislative Assembly is a provincial politician elected to represent a specific geographic constituency.
Yet even with this strong political rationale, the new system would require delicate political balancing on several fronts. First, there was a desire to ensure that the new system didn’t upset a long-held tradition of local autonomy in the province by creating a new level of government that might try to dictate what municipalities could and could not do. Second, there was a need to ensure that regional districts were not structured so as to exacerbate tensions between local and provincial politicians. According to one interviewee, this was a particularly sensitive point where the LMRPB was concerned: “the provincial priority at the time, as I understand, was: we’re happy to have regional districts do this work for us, but we don’t want to get to a point where the Chair of [what was then the LMRPB] can say ‘I speak on behalf of the majority of British Columbians” (Interviewee A, 2008). In essence, there was pressure to ensure that the region’s administrative boundaries did not allow its population to reach a point of dominance in the political sphere. Particularly with the rural background and power base of the Premier of the day, this perspective was not surprising.

When the new system did come forward, provisions in the legislation included the following:

- A requirement for regional districts to prepare regional plans, consisting of broad land use designations and the identification of major highways (BC, 1979, s. 807);

- A requirement that 2/3 of all regional district board directors having 2/3 of all votes on the regional board\(^56\) approve the plan and any future changes to it (BC, 1979, s. 808); and

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\(^{56}\) Within the GVRD, most of these directors were municipal mayors and/or councillors with voting rights at the board table apportioned on the basis of municipal populations. In smaller communities, boards included combinations of municipal representatives and directors elected from unincorporated areas known as *Electoral Areas.*
A requirement for each regional district to establish a Technical Planning Committee, including staff representatives from the regional district, its member municipalities, and various provincial representatives from several ministries and agencies, among them the Ministry of Municipal Affairs. The role of the committee was to advise its respective board on planning matters referred to them, and to liaise between the Region and member municipalities’ respective planning agencies (RSBC, 1979, s. 815).

The above requirements all clearly had prescriptive elements -- written as requirements using terms like “shall” rather than the more discretionary “may”. Such prescription would arguably fit into a technocratic approach to planning and decision-making. Nonetheless, the Technical Planning Committee requirement also exemplified a more deliberative approach to decision-making (set against the more prescriptive backdrop of the regional planning legislation itself) including both local and provincial representatives. While there is no documentation available to confirm this, such a deliberative forum may have been influenced by an established political culture in the Lower Mainland --a place that was still a very small city relative to other metropolitan areas. Moreover, it could have benefited from the earlier ideas of Charles Lindblom’s incrementalist decision-making, expressed in his 1959 article “The Science of Muddling Through”, and which would eventually culminate in his notion of partisan mutual adjustment in decision-making (Lindblom, 1965). Regardless of the causal factor(s), one could also consider the establishment of the Technical Planning Committee
(referred to in the GVRD itself as a Technical Advisory Committee, or TAC) as evidence of an important early precondition for communicative regionalism set by the senior government.

During the early post-war years, the first MGM plan was created for the LMRPB, known as The Lower Mainland Looks Ahead (LMRPB, 1952). The plan was broad and non-binding, containing four main goals:

- Industrial land conservation, in the hopes of future economic diversification from resource-based to manufacturing activities;
- Recreational land conservation;
- Floodplain protection, to prevent future flood damage like that experienced in 1948; and
- A decentralized pattern of metropolitan growth into smaller dispersed towns, to be led by industrial dispersal (p. 6).

The plan drew explicitly from the 1938 work of Lewis Mumford (LMRPB, 1952, p. 40), whose international reputation must have enhanced the currency of his ideas with Vancouver area planners — particularly at a time when Vancouver was perceived as merely the centre for a resource-dependent hinterland. From an outcome perspective, the plan focused largely on decentralization, with no overt attempts to provide for urban containment. Although not confirmed, the plan may have been influenced in this regard by proposals being discussed in other Canadian regions like Ottawa, where the nation’s first decentralization efforts began (Filion and Gad, 2006, p. 180). Interestingly, the justifications for this dispersed pattern included not just the livability goals from Mumford’s work, but also military security.
Coming less than a decade after the end of WWII, and written at the beginning of the Cold War with the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics, the plan argued that “from the point of view of safety from atomic air attack we are urged by military experts to limit our cities to not more than ten square miles [26 km] in area and to separate them by distances of at least ten miles of open country” (LMRPB, 1952, p. 39).

While Mumford’s work may not have been the cause of this anti-urbanist promise for decentralization\(^57\), the military rationale for containing cities was clearly threat-based; and it hints at the general discomfort with city living that many Lower Mainland politicians, citizens, and perhaps even planners may have grappled with at the time of plan development. This view of the city as threat is often cited in American planning literature, and attributed to the Jeffersonian ideal of rural life and values\(^58\).

The second major planning document produced by the agency, Chance and Challenge (LMRPB 1963) was also non-binding, but written after the LMRPB had accrued over a decade of experience. It began from intertwined premises: that land in the region was in short supply, owing to topographical constraints (ibid., p. 4); and that population growth would continue to be rapid. As with the first plan, the 1963 one sought an outcome of planned decentralization. It also elaborated on the notion of dispersed yet linked settlement concentrations (initiated in the 1952 plan) through more vivid imagery: it called for the Lower Mainland to “develop as a series of cities in a sea of green—a valley of separate cities

\(^{57}\) Some controversy has arisen among urban historians about the degree to which Mumford celebrated or ultimately refuted the modern city (For example, see Meyers, 1998 and Friedmann and Weaver, 1979).

\(^{58}\) For example, see Fishman, 1989 for discussion in the context of suburban development; see also Bruegmann, 2005, Chapters7-9 for related discussion.
surrounded by productive countryside and linked by a regional freeway network” (*ibid.*, p. 6). The cities themselves were intended to accommodate populations of 100,000 each and to contain distinct, economically self-sufficient centres of their own which “could either spring from existing nuclei or be developed from scratch” (*ibid.*, p. 7). In this latter goal one could detect an influence from the balanced growth type of MGM outcome theory.

To implement its concept, the plan acknowledged the limits of zoning and called for improved regional planning capacities as well as better coordination in general among provincial and federal agencies whose mandates impacted regional goals (*ibid.*, p. 13). Such calls would seem to reinforce rational-comprehensive approaches to process; but they may have also suggested a desire for increased dialogue with senior agencies, perhaps in recognition of the greater allocative and authoritative resources they possessed. While saying little about the role of municipalities, the desire for stronger regional capacities implied a paternalistic outlook on the part of the regional government towards municipalities. The plan also spoke specifically about needs for greater complementarity between BC Department of Highways' investments and the regional plan, tacitly acknowledged the importance of relationships with senior agencies. For example, the plan also recommended that borrowing for infrastructure investment to be underwritten by the Provincial government (*ibid.*, p. 22). Interestingly, the latter idea would eventually take hold in 1971 when the Province created the Municipal Finance Authority (and the exponentially enhanced borrowing powers it provided local governments). To the extent that the latter was a response to local government requests, the Municipal Finance Authority appears to be an important example of where some sort of more casually deliberative relationship existed...
between the Province and the regional government. Of course, this response was likely also influenced by recognition of the province-building potential that municipal infrastructures—enabled by a more robust support for municipal borrowing—could hold.

The first legally binding regional plan created by the LMRPB, The Official Lower Mainland Regional Plan was published in 1966. This plan reconfirmed the desirability of the decentralized nodes recommended in Chance and Challenge—this time replacing the term valley cities with the term regional towns. It is likely that this change in terminology directly responded to the ongoing discomfort with urbanity alluded to above. In fact (in a conversation with the author, c. 2000), Eric Thiessen, the former long range planning manager for the City of Coquitlam explained the rationale for the terms regional town and regional town centre, stressing that the word town was perceived as more reassuring to local politicians at that time than the word city. The plan sought to develop the regional towns through “staged extension of subdivision and services to assure compact development that will support a transportation system.” It contained five objectives, relating to: orderly and staged development; a healthy environment; efficient land use; effective transportation; and a healthy, diverse economy (LMRPB, 1966, p. 2).

The 1966 plan intended a relationship of proximity between industrial areas and regional town centres; and it also presumed that the two would retain distinct functions, with any offices destined for the Regional Town Centres, while other forms of employment activities would be directed to industrial sites. It also contained broad land use designations linked to the five objectives. Given the legal status which the 1966 plan came to enjoy under

59 Another Vancouver suburb
provincial legislation at the time, these land use designations would have carried more weight than Chance and Challenge. Without knowing how all of these designations compared to actual uses at the time, it is difficult to evaluate whether or not municipalities were satisfied with them. But in several cases they were the only applicable land use designations within a given jurisdiction, as municipal zoning for all parcels was still not uniformly implemented at that time, likely given both resource constraints and the role being played by regional districts in this regard. The final version of the Official Lower Mainland Regional Plan (1966) was thus quite prescriptive; moreover, there is no evidence of any public consultation taking place during this period. Yet it had also laid the cornerstone for a regional planning culture which would rely extensively on communicative principles. According to Peter Oberlander, the LMRPB had “beg[un] the long process… of getting the municipalities to talk to each other…. That was a very important learning process, teaching process… So the LMRPB began to gestate the regional conscience, the regional ability, the regionality of it” (interviewed in Harcourt et al., 2007, pp. 28-29).

In short, this early planning period for the LMRPB, and then the new GVRD, took place in a context of innovation and experimentation, in a broader senior government climate of province-building under the WAC Bennett administration. Technocratic planning was in vogue during this period; yet the Province’s desire to be responsive to its local governments resulted in some opportunities for deliberation and dialogue which may have been somewhat unique for their time period. This willingness to respond was likely facilitated by a climate of strong economic growth and the populist culture mentioned earlier, although these were also kept in check by a highly centralized provincial administration. At the same time,
regional interests in collaborating on issues of shared concern were sufficiently strong in the Lower Mainland to spur the Province in setting a particular direction with regard to regional planning legislation.

While unique, such opportunities likely created ongoing expectations among local and regional government politicians and staff, both regarding the level of influence they might have with the province, and their own sense of empowerment. Specific small scale governance innovations, such as the creation of Technical Advisory Committees (TACs) comprised of municipal and provincial representatives would also plant the seeds for a more deliberative regional culture to blossom over the longer term. At the same time, however, broad provincial capacities to form and reform local governments at will—even if unexercised—still reflected (and still do to some extent today) what Lazar and Seal (2005) label “a belief in a kind of bureaucratic rationality over local democracy” (p. 40).
Table 5.1 Chronology of Significant Provincial and Regional Planning Milestones, 1871 to 1983

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Relevant Provincial / Regional Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1871</td>
<td>British Columbia enters Canadian confederation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1914</td>
<td>Municipalities of Vancouver, Burnaby, Port Moody, Coquitlam, North Vancouver and West Vancouver create special purpose board for drainage services, recognized in 1924 by provincial legislation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1925</td>
<td>Province passes British Columbia Town Planning Act, which allows zoning bylaws</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930s</td>
<td>Lower Mainland-area bankruptcies in Burnaby and North Vancouver plus three other municipalities outside the Lower Mainland. Provincially-appointed commissioners replaced City Councils and had to address their debts. (British Columbia, 2009a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1933</td>
<td>Harper Commission studies municipal problems and recommends 1934 formation of British Columbia Department of Municipal Affairs (British Columbia, 2009a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1948</td>
<td>LMRPB formed voluntarily, then legalized through amendment to Town Planning Act (which also provided for other changes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1952</td>
<td>First GVRD plan: The Lower Mainland Looks Ahead (non-binding)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1953</td>
<td>W.A.C. Bennett becomes Premier</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1957</td>
<td>Substantial rewrite of the British Columbia local government legislation – The Municipal Act (British Columbia, 2009b)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1963</td>
<td>LMRPB Chance &amp; Challenge plan (non-binding)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td>Official Lower Mainland Regional Plan adopted, with broad, legally-binding land use designations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1969</td>
<td>LMRPB disbanded and replaced with GVRD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>Municipal Finance Authority Act adopted, boosting local and regional infrastructure borrowing abilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>W.A.C. Bennett loses provincial leadership to Dave Barrett (NDP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972/1973</td>
<td>Provincial Agricultural Land Reserve Act Passed and Land Reserve established</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974-1982</td>
<td>1975 GVRD adopts RTC policy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975</td>
<td>Barrett loses provincial leadership to Bill Bennett (Social Credit; son of WAC Bennett)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>GVRD adopts Livable Region Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983</td>
<td>Spetifore lands decision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983</td>
<td>Province cancels regional planning powers &amp; plans</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: summarized by author from sources listed in Sections 5.1 and 5.2, with any additional sources noted in chart
5.2 Gathering Steam to Face an Abrupt Halt: MGM Legislation and Plans, 1966-1983

To look at 1966 to 1983 as a single period in this case may initially seem strange. After all, those seventeen years saw a high degree of social, political and economic change, both globally and at the more local level. From 1965 to 1975 the Vietnam War was being fought; and social protest movements observed in the US were also having some important local impacts. In cities across Canada, the 1970s in particular were a time of significant citizen mobilization to address issues (Sancton, 2006, p. 313; Grant, 2006\(^{60}\); see also Harcourt et al., 2007, for description in the Vancouver context).

My rationale for discussing events from 1966 to 1983 as a single period centres on its period’s culmination in a dramatic legislative decision by the Province in 1983 (discussed shortly).

5.2.1 Provincial Legislation and Context, 1966-1983

The statutory environment created for regional planning in 1965 remained largely intact\(^ {61}\) until 1983. One important exception, however, was the decision in 1969 to disband the LMRPB (despite its successes) and to replace it with four new regional districts, one of which became the Greater Vancouver Regional District. Harcourt et al (2007) hint that this

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\(^{60}\) Although Grant notes that by the late 1970s this had subsided somewhat.

\(^{61}\) Other than a minor amendment which changed the 2/3 majority requirement for board approval of plan adoption and revision into a requirement for a simple majority; and a requirement in 1970 that all regional districts adopt land use plans (Chadwick, 2002).
decision was politically motivated – a perspective which provincial government interviewees for this dissertation do not contest. This was a clear example of the Province using its power in what was perceived as an arbitrary way, by refusing to discuss this move with the LMRPB; and it would be the first of several overt power struggles between regional and more senior levels of government.

According to a former LMRPB staff member:

*The last thing on earth the Province wanted was a regional plan. They had established legislation for it assuming that someone would paint a pretty picture and adopt it and it would have no teeth in it... The idea at the time was that “the queen could not be bound by her subjects” and that line was quoted back at us dozens of times by Municipal Affairs, by Highways and other ministries. It was just a constant battle there* (Pearson, in Chadwick, 2002, p. 43).

Around that time, a dispute (regarding the amount of agricultural land to be consumed in providing for railway access to a newly developing coal port development at Roberts Bank in Tsawwassen) was the triggering factor. The decision was finessed, however, provided by what Harcourt *et al* (2007) labelled “one of the oldest tricks in the book – saying it had a better idea” (p. 78). This better idea consisted of creating regional districts throughout the province of British Columbia, and replacement of the LMRPB with four new, geographically smaller regional districts, the most critical being the Greater Vancouver Regional District.

One Provincial interviewee also notes that there had been some practical difficulties with the size of the previous agency, irrespective of the dispute. As a geography student at the time with an interest in the LMRPB, he observed:
I was quite shocked that the government would get rid of the LMRPB because it was doing very good things. However, in retrospect, you could argue that it wasn’t very accountable, because it was so big and there was such a distance between the elected officials that sat on the board and the citizens (Interviewee B, 2008).

Moreover, correspondence from the Minister of Municipal Affairs to the Chair of the LMRPB in 1968 indicates that sufficient disagreement among board members themselves showed the structure was not working for its members. The letter states:

1. *In recent months a number of Municipal councils have expressed great dissatisfaction with the present operations of the Regional Planning Board.*

2. *One of the major contributors to the activities of the Board, namely: the City of Vancouver is obviously not satisfied with the political structure of the Board....*

4. *From time to time, in a variety of ways, the difference between the political structure of the Board and the technical structure of the Board has become confused.... [and]*

6. *The information that the plan of the Board was a flexible instrument has been commented upon by a number of Municipal Councils in terms of the rigidity of the appeal procedures (Campbell, 1968).*

In short, the Province’s actions sought to protect its interests which, in that context, revolved around proper functioning of provincially-granted land use tools and structures, as well as provincial economic interests potentially impacted by regional decisions.

Another important development occurred during the 1970s which would have a profound impact on the Vancouver region’s growth management outcomes. This related to a change in government. British Columbia provincial governments have been renowned for their polarization between (purportedly) left- and right-wing governments from the 1970s through to the 21st c. (Blake, 1996); thus connecting administration changes to new developments in
senior government texts affecting MGM is critical. (For chronology of relevant administration changes, see Table 5.2 on page 157.)

In 1972 the Social Credit administration of WAC Bennett was replaced with the New Democratic Party (NDP)–a group which was significantly more leftward-leaning. This radical shift in government was ironically enabled in part by rapid increases in public sector employment under WAC Bennett, occurring at a time following several major struggles between the administration and various public sector employment groups (Blake, 1996, see especially pp. 73-74). If the government hadn’t changed at this time, continued tensions in the regional planning system might have reached a crisis point even sooner than they eventually did (see Karlson in Chadwick, pp. 53-54). Led by Dave Barrett, the new government introduced the Land Commission Act in Parliament in 1973, with the goal of preserving farmland through special land use designations at the provincial level. The latter was also significantly arbitrary, in that the preservation approach was not negotiated; yet some consultation did occur on the legislation’s implementation in terms of how lands were nominated and the fact that an exclusion process was set in place.

To implement this new law, during the next two years and through consultation with existing regional and local governments, lands were identified to form part of the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR). The NDP was defeated provincially in 1975 by the Social Credit Party, led by Bill Bennett (the son of earlier Premier WAC Bennett). Nonetheless, the ALR was retained and still remains in place today. Lands in this ALR can only be removed for development with provincial approval from a provincially-appointed Agricultural Land
Commission, based on a predetermined set of criteria (many of them technical); but prior municipal endorsement is also needed before the Commission will even consider an application. The ALR marked the first time that an explicit urban containment tool would structure MGM activities in Greater Vancouver, as the ALR became, and remains today, a *de facto* urban containment boundary. As Tomalty (2002) observes, this may have been the single most important decision impacting MGM outcomes in Greater Vancouver.
### Table 5.2 Chronology of BC Provincial Administrations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time Period</th>
<th>Leader of (Premier)</th>
<th>Political Party</th>
<th>Administration’s Characteristics and Policy Themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1953-1972</td>
<td>W.A.C. Bennett</td>
<td>Social Credit Party (Socreds)</td>
<td>▪ Nominally free enterprise, but receptive to social welfare ideas&lt;br&gt;▪ Highly populist style&lt;br&gt;▪ Emphasis on job creation through major infrastructure projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972-1975</td>
<td>Dave Barrett</td>
<td>New Democratic Party (NDP)</td>
<td>▪ Left wing policies, including large additions to BC Civil Service, ALR, mandatory automobile insurance scheme, introduction of Pharmacare.&lt;br&gt;▪ Large budget overruns&lt;br&gt;▪ Also highly populist style</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1975-1986</td>
<td>Bill Bennett (son of W.A.C.)</td>
<td>Socred</td>
<td>▪ Modernized and professionalized his political party and the British Columbia public administration&lt;br&gt;▪ Drastic restraint program from 1983-1986 to address an economic recession and a broader neoconservative agenda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986-1991</td>
<td>Bill Vander Zalm</td>
<td>Socred</td>
<td>▪ Former Mayor of Surrey (outer Vancouver suburb)&lt;br&gt;▪ Shift back to populist approaches&lt;br&gt;▪ Uncertain / inconsistent approaches to policy development, frequently based on the premier's personal opinion and strong religious beliefs&lt;br&gt;▪ Plagued by scandals which led to his resignation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td>Rita Johnston</td>
<td>Socred</td>
<td>▪ Interim leader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991-1996</td>
<td>Mike Harcourt</td>
<td>NDP</td>
<td>▪ Former Mayor of Vancouver&lt;br&gt;▪ Moderate and consultative stance, but business angry with his labour code and corporate capital tax&lt;br&gt;▪ Scandals by other party members led to his resignation, but own reputation remained good.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996-1999</td>
<td>Glen Clark</td>
<td>NDP</td>
<td>▪ More left-wing than Harcourt, strong trade unionist&lt;br&gt;▪ Misleading budgets and failed mega-projects&lt;br&gt;▪ Police corruption investigation led to his resignation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999-2000</td>
<td>Dan Miller</td>
<td>NDP</td>
<td>▪ Interim leader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000-2001</td>
<td>Ujjal Dosanjh</td>
<td>NDP</td>
<td>▪ Interim leader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001 to present day</td>
<td>Gordon Campbell</td>
<td>Liberal</td>
<td>▪ Another former Vancouver mayor&lt;br&gt;▪ Pro-business, fiscal conservative, introduced austerity measures in first term of office, clamped down on unions. Able to do so because opposition decimated.&lt;br&gt;▪ Second term more moderate, possibly given strong opposition come-back; also new emphasis on climate change issues.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Summarized by author from Raynor, 2000 and supplemented with post-2000 data and the author’s perceptions as a planning professional from 1992 to present.
The 1970s were a favourable time for metropolitan planning in Greater Vancouver, as will be evident from the description of regional planning texts below. They were especially favourable because even as the government which had introduced the ALR was defeated, the legacy of agricultural land protection remained. Such protection would play an important role in containing urban sprawl, even beyond GVRD boundaries. But then on November 18, 1983 a radical change to the Municipal Act completely eliminated regional planning powers.

This change was not without warning. Intense grumbling about the regional district system throughout British Columbia in the late 1970s (Vancouver Sun, 1975 and 1977) coincided with creation, under then Minister of Municipal Affairs Hugh Curtis, of a Regional District Review Committee called the Farmer Commission (Regional District Review Committee, 1978). A 1979 cabinet shuffle replaced Curtis with Bill Vander Zalm as the new minister, and effectively put the committee’s work on hold. Under Vander Zalm, further consultation ensued, this time on an entirely new planning act. The proposed new act aspired to reduce regulation inherent in the system, while providing for greater provincial involvement in regional planning, and requirements for local governments to conform to provincial goals (British Columbia, 1980). These ideas eventually culminated in Bill 9.

The GVRD was made aware of the pending legislation and, faced with the prospect of losing both its land use planning mandate and resources, GVRD staff prepared a report presenting possible options for circumventing the legislation, with the Province’s consent. Municipal consent would be required for the latter to occur –something which GVRD staff believed would be highly unlikely (GVRD, 1982b, p. 12). Staff acknowledged that unanimity was
doubtful because there had been some contention among member municipalities about the extent to which the GVRD could override municipal decisions on individual sites (*ibid.*, p.10).

Bill 9 was eventually rejected by Cabinet, largely due to a combination of resistance from other provincial ministries and Vander Zalm’s relative outsider status (Harkness, 2000 in Chadwick, p. 78). After the 1983 election, Vander Zalm was moved to another portfolio and the position of Minister of Municipal Affairs was assumed by Bill Ritchie. But this was not the end of the story, as new legislation\(^\text{62}\) simply eliminating regional scale land use planning was proposed and adopted by the Legislature late in 1983.

The wording conveying this legislative change is in fact quite terse: the January 1984 consolidation of the act simply provides for repeal of the sections which had previously provided for these powers (British Columbia, 1984a, S. 807 and 808), and then states that “All regional plans and official regional plans prepared or designated before Sections 807 and 808 were repealed are cancelled and have no effect” (British Columbia, 1984a, S. 808.1). Section 815 which had required the creation of a Technical Planning Committee / TAC was also repealed; but, as will be discussed shortly, the continued life of the GVRD’s Technical Planning Committee would play an important role in maintaining some semblance of regional planning even in the absence of official powers to conduct this activity. According to an interviewee who worked for the Province at the time, there had been no internal staff involvement in the Ministry of Municipal Affairs or damage control associated with the

\(^{62}\) Confusingly, the new legislation was also known as Bill 9, but with a much different prescription than the legislation proposed by Vander Zalm.
removal of regional planning powers – staff simply had to “get out of the way of the politicians” (Interviewee B, 2008).

The explanation for this radical step varies depending on who you ask. According to one interviewee, a crisis in the form of an economic recession played an enormous role:

\[\text{It was the deepest recession in BC history. It was by a dramatic fashion the sharpest descent into recession in BC history. And I have fond recollections of – we were still looking at positive growth rates... in January of 1982. Quite significant ones. The issues there were inflation, which was running about 16\% or 17\%, something like that. They were – people were building all over the place. And by the end of that year there was no construction. Buildings were left half-built, people had walked away from them, unemployment was up, the bottom had fallen out of the housing market. This all happened within the space of months.... After the election in 1983, the Caucus sat down and said ‘BC is a different place. It’s a different place from when we were elected for our last term. We have to take that into account. These are structural changes (and with hindsight you can debate whether that’s true), but these are structural changes. On a whole range of things from labour policy to economic policy to planning policy, this is going to be different.’ And they were faced... with a lot of division in the local government world.... And there was a real sense that if the government doesn’t do something here, the BC economy is going to stagnate and this will not change (Interviewee C, 2008).}\]

Such poor economic conditions thus created a strong sense of threat for Provincial Cabinet members. The magnitude of the economic threat faced in 1983 may thus have played a significant role not just in the decision to remove regional planning powers but in the way the removal occurred. From another perspective, arbitrary actions may reflect a desire to reduce uncertainty (see Abbott, 2005). Interestingly, work by scholars of organizational behaviour indicates that categorizing information (about an issue, potential decision, or action) as either an opportunity or a threat enhances salience for decision-makers, and will have specific

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63 See also Raynor, 2000; Blake (1996); and Plekas (2006),
consequences for how that information is then processed. Where an issue to be addressed is categorized as a threat, decision makers are more likely to exclude subordinates from participating in decisions or contributing knowledge related to that issue, and to make decisions in a highly centralized manner (Straw et al., 1981, in Dutton and Jackson, 1987)\(^64\). The Bennett administration’s general perspective on planning at that point in time was also one that was quite common across many jurisdictions in other wealthy nations, as described broadly in Chapter 4.

Other commentators have focused on the land use struggles which instigated the decision; and they emphasize events which followed the exclusion of a property known as the Spetifore lands from the ALR. This provincially-decided exclusion was intended to enable development to occur on the property; but the latter remained undevelopable when in 1979 the GVRD Board refused to endorse a new bylaw that would enable development upon the newly excluded lands (Harcourt et al., 2007, pp. 70-73). This refusal marked a direct challenge to the Province’s authority and interests.

Another perspective from the Provincial level on this period is somewhat more cynical about the players involved –not necessarily questioning the need for radical action, but taking issue with the way it was done. One interviewee comments on the fact that the preceding election victory had been a surprise one for the Social Credit Party, which had been down in the polls for several months prior. After the victory “they came back with almost the attitude, well, if they elected us after that—we’ll do anything… every Ministry was cut by 30%, they…

\(^{64}\) Conversely, research by Nutt (1984, in Dutton and Jackson) finds that issues labelled opportunities are more amenable to inclusive decision-making.
privatized a bunch of things and... they got rid of regional planning as a deregulation measure” (Interviewee B, 2008). The interviewee then goes on to describe the brutal Provincial staff cuts and low morale for much of the mid 1980s – and an apparent expectation by Bill Ritchie (then Minister of Municipal Affairs) that all regional districts would fire their entire planning staffs. Thus, while reducing uncertainty and clarifying lines of authority and responsibility may have been the motive for eliminating regional planning, the politicians who carried it out were apparently neither diplomatic nor restrained in the implementation.

A third interviewee suggests that Spetifore was not the lone factor -- that a legal dispute in another regional district outside the Lower Mainland, between the municipality of Saanich and Capital Regional District also had an impact, rankling provincial politicians who, during a time of economic recession “really didn’t like taxpayers’ money being spent in the courts, where one local government sues another over land use issues” (Interviewee A, 2008). At the same time, further disputes at the Robert’s Bank Coal Terminal in the Lower Mainland suburb of Delta added fuel to the fire. Finally, the same interviewee adds that in 1983

> there were a number of people in Cabinet who simply didn’t like planning, and a number of people in government who didn’t see a value in planning and they certainly saw a conflict between what the Province wanted to do and what planning was delivering. And that’s inevitable... there’s a lot of debate still about that [today] at a Provincial level.

The upshot was that, as a result of the 1983 change, during much of the 1980s, regional planning powers were completely absent for the GVRD. This decision was made in what was perceived as an arbitrary and non-collaborative way by the Province. While the consequences for Greater Vancouver and its MGM program would be significant, the decision was made in response to issues of provincial-scale concern, and the clear desire to
protect provincial economic interests at a time of crisis. This would also seem to illustrate a point made by Cowell and Murdoch, that: “there are occasions when the state is required to align the coalitions, networks or partnerships in ways which maintain its (and for that matter their) integrity and coherence” (1999, p. 655). The fact that provincial and regional agendas were able to get so “out-of-sync” with each other by 1983 – notwithstanding the strengthening of communicative elements in the region (described below) – raises some important questions for theorists and practitioners of communicative regionalism.

5.2.2 MGM in the Glory Days of the Livable Region Plan

Meanwhile, from the late 1960s to the shock of 1983, an incredibly participatory approach to MGM was occurring in Greater Vancouver. Following the 1969 dissolution of the LMRPB, and its replacement with the much smaller GVRD and other new regional districts to the east, work began quickly to create a new plan called The Livable Region Plan (LRP), designed for the GVRD’s smaller territory. This plan was eventually completed in 1975 as a conceptual guide, rather than a land use map, and given actual status through a series of 22 separate board resolutions relative to specific provisions (Chadwick, 2002, p. 65). It would be followed later by a more detailed official regional plan specifying land uses in 1980. It was developed through extensive research and dialogue between decision-makers (including members of the GVRD board who held concurrent offices as mayors and city councillors with individual member municipalities), staff and the public at large.

According to Harcourt et al (2007), much of the energy behind this approach came from Harry Lash, planning director for the GVRD at the time of LRP development. They describe
Lash as “the exemplar of public participation in the planning issues of his time” (p. 76).

Lash empowered a team of six staff to make regular contact with 500 individuals representing local community groups to determine their vision for the metropolitan area (*ibid.*, p. 83). This information was funnelled back to both planners and elected officials.

The process was quite groundbreaking for the region at the time, in that:

> surprises awaited at every public information meeting. People cared enough about the Livable Region ‘Plan’ (LRP) to fight about it. It was as if the LRP were an esoteric religious belief practiced by monk-like fanatics who argued that the ‘Plan’ ...was the escalator to a better life here on earth.... [And yet] debating...happened often enough. Not just by yelling... No, we’re talking fights here. Fisticuffs (*ibid.*, pp. 85-86).

In the time leading up to the plan’s adoption, numerous studies and workshops had taken place, including substantial efforts to involve the public at large, and several dialogue forums for elected officials of member municipalities (Criteria #1-3 for communicative regionalism).

Based on discussions of this process in Harcourt et al (2007), as well as the detailed reports of those exhaustive workshops and studies, the creation process for the LRP was strongly communicative.

This communicative component was more than tokenistic—it sought to provide a high quality of technical information, which in turn promoted a specific spatial vision for the region. This vision, as with preceding plans, sought to manage growth through decentralization; but it also dedicated more effort and energy to planning for nodes within areas of decentralized growth.

In July 1975, prior to actually completing the LRP, the GVRD Board officially declared some important policy decisions regarding regional town centres (RTCs), and also resolved
to take steps to enshrine RTC reserves in its Official Regional Plan (Spaeth, 1975). Among decisions endorsed at this time were policies to:

- Officially endorse the RTC concept, with Metrotown and New Westminster’s downtown designated as the first RTCs and a third promised by 1986 for the North Surrey area; and
- Actively pursue through some unspecified form of intergovernmental partnership the development of offices and cultural amenities, including needed land acquisitions, and an explicit statement discouraging employment growth in downtown Vancouver and another significant Vancouver employment corridor (the Broadway corridor).

Another important facet of the 1976 plan, and one which represented a significant change from *Chance and Challenge* was a new emphasis on transit in helping to manage growth by linking key nodes. According to a planner who had worked for both Burnaby and the GVRD at different points in time, Burnaby planning director Tony Parr played an important role in making that happen (Interviewee E, 2008). This demonstrates the significant bureaucratic influence by local government staff on goal development. Such influence does not have to negate the degree of responsiveness to public concerns, but it does underscore the importance of the planner as more than just a facilitator. The extent to which staff’s technical and political acumen could and did play a role will be further discussed (Chapters 6 through 9) regarding the three employment nodes.
A consultant’s background report which accompanied the LRP policies provided more detail on work already underway at the time to implement them. This included agreements with both provincial and federal governments for the relocation of key senior government facilities to the RTCs (Spaeth, 1975, p. 1), and the recognition that such moves were contingent upon getting a rapid transit station in each RTC (ibid., p. 12). Well into the 1990s the GVRD was somewhat unique among North American metropolitan areas for lacking control over its own transit authority (Meligrana, 1999). The articulation of these interrelated agency needs suggests that local and regional decision-makers appreciated at least somewhat the positive aspects of power (which in this case rested with senior governments) to further goal implementation. To this end, some efforts were made at bureaucratic levels to consult senior government stakeholders as well, and to acknowledge the ongoing importance such stakeholders would have on plan implementation (Criterion #4 for communicative regionalism).

The report also sought to identify amenities and actions which might render RTCs more attractive to public and private sector office development, and draw other compatible employment uses to the RTCs. This wish list was drawn from a separate 1974 survey of private corporations and included:

- Freedom from delay of construction plans
- Land assembly at the government level
- Tax or financing concessions
- A major commitment by government office users
- Economical land and rental costs
- Freedom from uneconomic restrictions on site configuration and design facilities
- Measures to stabilize a climate for investment
- Initial and continuing federal and provincial investment and support in terms of an economic base, land banks, serviced land, an infrastructure, and room for expansion (Spaeth, 1975, p. 22).
The notion of land assembly from the above list presumed that an integrated and coordinated approach to RTC development would yield better MGM outcomes, and that municipal governments would need help to play their part (ibid., p. 34). Assembly was not proposed as a subsidy, but as an efficiency measure to expedite desired development (ibid., p. 36). One proposed option for assisting with land assembly included a $15 million fund for RTC acquisitions, to be replenished and expanded as development occurred. But regardless of the form such assistance might take, the report clearly anticipated collaboration in assembly by provincial, regional and municipal agencies (ibid., p. 36), suggesting at least some hope for meeting criterion #4 (stakeholder involvement in implementation). Given the provincial climate at the time of plan development, when the left-leaning Barratt administration was in power (1972-1975), these ideas could have been feasible. As will be discussed further in the Metrotown case (Chapter 6), assembly would be an important aspect of actions taken to influence desired MGM outcomes.

While the 1975 LRP contained no land use designations, there was eventually a desire to formalize its directions through an updated official land use plan to replace the older 1966 version. At the same time, there was recognition that the GVRD did not exist in isolation; and that its successes would depend, in part, on planning successes and failures further up the Fraser Valley. To provide for effective coordination, the GVRD collaborated with all four regional districts which had once comprised the Lower Mainland Regional Planning Board to create the 1980 Official Regional Plan for the Lower Mainland. This plan was successfully
adopted and legally-binding while regional planning powers remained in effect. The plan’s nine broad goals were as follows:

1. Protect farmland, floodplain and natural assets from urban and industrial development
2. Develop and enhance the use of farmland and other natural resources for the long-term benefit of the Lower Mainland
3. Locate more of the total population growth w/in the metropolitan area
4. Locate more of the population growth occurring outside the metropolitan area to the north of the Fraser River
5. Focus 4/5 of Fraser Valley growth in five valley towns.
6. Promote higher residential densities in the metropolitan area and the valley towns.
7. Focus new commercial employment & high and medium density housing in and around the metropolitan core and existing regional centres.
8. Improve the balance in the distribution of jobs and labour force in all parts of the Lower Mainland.
9. Provide transportation & physical services in a way which will reinforce the development concept. (Central Fraser Valley Regional District et al., 1980, p. 9)

Unfortunately, however, the plan’s lifespan was relatively short, in light of the 1983 legislation. The circumstances surrounding this removal were discussed above; and the event was often considered the culmination of a number of Provincial-regional clashes. But if the 1976 MGM development process in particular was truly communicative—and we presume its consultative approach extended to all stakeholders, including those at senior levels of government—why did things eventually backfire? This question can be addressed from two different conceptual perspectives—communicative planning theory and ANT.
### Table 5.3 Assessment of Livable Region Plan Against Collaborative Planning Criteria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criterion #1 Information Base and Role of Information in Facilitating Dialogue</th>
<th>Discussion / Examples</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>This criterion was met.</strong></td>
<td>Many discussion forums were held, among both the public at large and elected officials. Extensive written materials were prepared to help clarify issues at stake, and to document preliminary decisions made in advance of plan finalization (e.g. agreement on the RTC concept).</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criterion #2 Role of Planner as Facilitator</th>
<th>Discussion / Examples</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>This criterion was met.</strong></td>
<td>Harry Lash placed great emphasis on consultation, vision, and process, as opposed to regional land use designations.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Criterion #3 Stakeholder Involvement in Plan Development</th>
<th>Discussion / Examples</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>This criterion was met</strong> through meetings and discussion forums among public and elected officials.</td>
<td></td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criterion #4 Stakeholder Involvement in Plan Implementation</th>
<th>Discussion / Examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Criterion only partly met.</strong></td>
<td>Successes in this regard included ongoing dialogue with municipal stakeholders during plan implementation and entrenching a regional consciousness. Lash’s notion of the plan as a process rather than an end state suggests openness to implementation involvement. Yet not enough ongoing deliberation occurred with other key stakeholders at the provincial level – particularly after provincial political actors changed—or with developers.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Criterion #5 Ongoing Cultural Shifts from Process</th>
<th>Discussion / Examples</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Criterion only partly met.</strong></td>
<td>(See Criterion #4 above)</td>
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<tr>
<th>Criterion #6 Goal of Consensus</th>
<th>Discussion / Examples</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>This criterion was met.</strong></td>
<td>The consultation approach and Lash’s desire for a document that was more of a process than an end product imply a desire for consensus from the outset.</td>
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</table>
A communicative planning theorist might conclude that the region met most of the criteria for communicative regionalism (see Table 5.3 above), although it failed to continue involving some key stakeholders (the Province and local developers) to a sufficient degree in plan implementation particularly between 1976 and 1983\textsuperscript{65}. But this response does not say enough about \textit{why} the ongoing stakeholder involvement didn’t happen. And knowing \textit{why} could prevent a similar failure from occurring in future. This is where the questions raised by ANT help shed further light.

As noted in Chapter 3, (refer back to Table 3.2), my reading of ANT literature suggests four questions to help us improve our understanding of actual cases of growth management processes. Of these four questions, #2 (relating to network instability) and # 3 (relating to texts within the network) are particularly instructive for probing the disconnect between regional and provincial governments which led to the 1983 removal of regional planning powers.

The reader will recall that ANT sees networks as inherently unstable, but the reasons for that instability will be unique to each network. At the same time, such instability may be masked by the presence of seemingly stable network components or actors. Such components include both organizational actors and the texts they use as intermediaries for influencing other actors in the network. Especially when considered in isolation, both the Province and the Regional District may have appeared on the surface as stable actors at that point in time, as would the texts which each used to carry out their goals and manage relationships with

\textsuperscript{65} Note that given the difficulty of separating out some of the other plans, particularly since the Creating Our Future Plan and 1996 LRSP essentially blended into each other, the assessment of the communicative elements of these plans occurs together in Table 5.5.
each other as they related to growth management – the Municipal Act on the provincial side, and the 1976 Livable Region Plan on the GVRD side.

What did this stability mean in tangible terms? The initial enshrinement of regional planning powers in the Municipal Act would have conveyed a basic level of commitment by the Province to regional planning functions. And presumably the GVRD would have taken these powers for granted when it invested staff time and money in to developing its MGM plans – particularly the consultation-intensive Livable Region Plan. In fact, without the legislation it would have likely been difficult for the GVRD to bring all the necessary municipal stakeholders to the discussion table.

The Province likely also took that enshrinement somewhat for granted but perhaps only up to a point; and this conditionality was likely not appreciated by key GVRD actors. Factors which, according to Interviewees A, B, and C, shook the Province’s commitment to regional planning provisions included both: the economic instability of the early 1980s; and the perception that the GVRD’s exercise of its powers (granted by the Province) was exacerbating that economic instability, by creating major obstacles to development. Left unresolved, this instability eventually helped rupture a major link in the Greater Vancouver MGM network – the link between the GVRD and the Province. Matters were exacerbated by a change in provincial actors at a key point in LRP finalization. While the Barrett administration had dominated during the period when much of the LRP legwork took place, by the time the plan was adopted, a new fiscally-conservative administration, led by Bill Bennett, had taken its place. Such a shift would have also been likely to further destabilize
provincial attachment to key provisions of the plan, which may have contradicted or inconvenienced the new government’s agenda.

This particular set of circumstances was unique (to a particular region at a particular point in time). Nonetheless, it suggests that process theories used in MGM could more effectively consider what juggling and / or balancing acts might be needed to keep powerful players involved in collaborative planning efforts and their implementation over the long haul – particularly in the face of externally-generated instability and shifts in key individuals and stakeholder organizations. The 1983 example demonstrates that the political pressure that comes from “looking bad” (i.e., if an actor ceases to participate “properly” in a communicative exercise) is often not enough to encourage major stakeholders to continue participating in a deliberative manner under circumstances where the stakes appear to be too high. It also demonstrates that in a representative democracy, scale matters –and that larger scale organizations have different concerns and support bases than smaller ones. For example, even if the Province’s action proved unpopular in the GVRD (and, planners’ protests notwithstanding, even this point would have been in debate at the time), it still had other constituencies and actors beyond the Lower Mainland’s civic institutions to consider. If a communicative process could not factor in those broader scale interests, it would have little currency for the senior government.

At the same time, the GVRD’s perceptions of its own text (the LRP) as a stable document which had sufficient public and local government buy-in to outweigh provincial needs and perspectives may have compounded the economic instabilities of the mid-1980s described
above. Such instabilities would have been further exacerbated by ongoing tensions in the balance of power between the GVRD and the rest of British Columbia, as first mentioned by Interviewee A in Section 5.1.1. Given the extensive and unprecedented level of consultation involved in its creation, the LRP would have had considerable status not just at the GVRD board table, but among elected local officials and staff of GVRD member municipalities (not to mention the Greater Vancouver public at large). And the strength of local public support may have obscured, at least for regional-scale players, any irritants or uncertainties from the provincial and developer end of things. At the same time, when documents are strong—that is, where prior uncertainties around public values and expectations appear to have been resolved through a planning process—there may be a temptation to presume that strength will endure to the extent the document remains untouched or static. This apparent strength may have given the GVRD both the confidence to proceed with implementation and the desire to avoid questioning the plan’s premises to any significant extent. Yet as had already become apparent from scholarly analyses of the results of UK office decentralization and metropolitan containment schemes (Hall et al., 1973; Daniels, 1975), market conditions were not entirely prepared to support offices in RTCs. Here again, while this example comes from a unique context, it also suggests some broader insights for communicative planning theory about both the need for planner clarity on the strengths and weaknesses of finalized texts and the need for a greater appreciation of contextual factors which may increase the potential instability of all texts.

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66 For more in-depth discussion of different forms of uncertainty in planning, see Abbott, 2005.
5.3 From Loss to Stabilization to Strength: 1984 to 2006

5.3.1 Provincial Legislation – A Gradual Re-Acceptance

Once regional planning had been effectively eliminated from the local government toolkit, planning in general was considered suspect in the years that immediately followed:

[A]t the time there wasn’t a lot of empathy for planners and it was around the early 80s when I was actually working as a planner and there was a move in this ministry to eliminate all planning positions. If you wanted to stick around as a planner, you had to be called a development officer, because your job was to facilitate development, not to get in the way of development (Interviewee A).

Nonetheless, some low key efforts continued at the provincial level to support planning at the municipal scale. In the mid-1980s the Municipal Act was given a thorough reorganization and update, even as regional planning remained off the table. Provisions specifically affecting municipal planning powers included: greater clarification on the purpose of the OCP (which remained a tool local governments could choose to adopt –or not); and a series of content regulations for OCPs once a local government chose to adopt one. The new content requirements included: the mandatory identification of the location of each type of land use; and a requirement to clarify how much land would be needed to accommodate residential demand at least five years out from the date of plan adoption. The updated Municipal Act also acknowledged that OCPs could address a finite range of issues, but might have an interest in matters outside a local government’s jurisdiction. The Municipal Act thus gave explicit permission for local governments to address such matters in general terms, allowing them to “only state the broad objective of the local government with respect to that matter unless the minister has… required or authorized the local government to state a policy
with respect to that matter” (British Columbia, 1987, S. 945 (5)). In essence, such changes reinforced a paternalistic relationship between the Province and municipalities along with a rational-comprehensive approach to planning. (For detailed chronology of provincial and regional planning milestones after 1984, refer to Table 5.4 below.)

Table 5.4 Chronology of Significant Provincial and Regional Planning Milestones, 1984 to 2006

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Relevant Provincial / Regional Event</th>
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| 1986 to 1990 | Expo ’86 held and Skytrain (ALRT rapid transit) service connecting Burnaby to other regional destinations is established  
Bennett retires from politics, replaced by Bill Vander Zalm (also Social Credit)  
Late 1980s “regional planning by stealth” tacitly endorsed by provincial and regional representatives  
1989 Municipal Act allows some regional development services (limited voluntary regionalism)  
1990 GVRD adopts Creating Our Future (non-binding) |
| 1991       | Mike Harcourt (NDP) becomes premier; provincial efforts begin on new regional planning legislation                                                             |
| 1993       | GVRD adopts Transport 2021 (regional transit priorities). Favours advancing what would eventually become the Millennium rapid transit line, including additional service through Burnaby (see map in Figure 6.5) |
| 1995       | Province passes Growth Strategies Act                                                                                                                               |
| 1996       | GVRD adopts Livable Region Strategic Plan (LRSP)  
Province deems LRSP to be a growth strategy as set out in legislation  
Glen Clark (NDP) replaces Harcourt as premier |
| 1998       | Millennium Skytrain project formally announced, giving Burnaby additional rapid transit service                                                                  |
| Early 2000s| Sustainable Region Initiative launched to renew regional planning & guide GVRD corporate activities                                                             |
| 2003       | City of Richmond challenges LRSP by approving development in a no growth area (Green Zone) specified in LRSP                                                    |

Source: summarized by author from sources noted in Section 5.3, except as added.
Some softening of provincial attitudes towards regional planning began to occur in the late 1980s. Around 1986 or 1987, still under Bill Bennett’s administration, several Provincial planners (today in senior management positions) began to prepare for an eventual resurgence of regional planning, at least in the Lower Mainland. An interviewee rationalizes this as follows: “[We] started working on this urban affairs agenda, because this would be post-Expo, the economy was going to pick up again, and we knew urban development was going to pick up again.” (Interviewee A, 2008) There were also ongoing conversations between GVRD and Ministry of Municipal Affairs staff at the time, ensuring a steady stream of information between both agencies. This dialogue would ensure that each had a fairly close view in real time of the subtle political shifts which might eventually enable a resurgence of regional planning.

Could this have been an example of communicative rationality finally, if slowly, winning out? And, if so, wouldn’t that suggest the communicative planning theorists are right? Yes and no. On the one hand it appears that, over time, the Province did eventually appreciate the value of regional planning once more, both in Greater Vancouver and for British Columbia overall. As part of that there was likely also an appreciation of the local political support for regional planning. As Section 5.3.2 will show, such support continued in a covert way during the 1980s. But to cite this as conclusive proof that communicative planning

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67 Interviewees cited this as the approximate time frame, but could not recall the exact year.
68 Expo ’86 was a world’s fair exposition, often seen as marking a positive economic transition point for Vancouver and British Columbia. It coincided with Vancouver’s Centenary, and with the redevelopment of lands once used for processing lumber. For further discussion of this redevelopment process, see Hutton.
eventually won out is to take a superficial analysis, and to ignore other critical factors, to be discussed below.

First of all, the conversations that eventually helped revive regional planning were not just occurring between random agency representatives. Rather, these conversations were occurring between appropriately-placed actors, each of whom also possessed a significant degree of political acumen. Moreover, some of the connections were not forged just through discussion on legislative matters. Rather, they had been facilitated by earlier work experiences between at least two of the actors, who had been co-workers at the City of Burnaby at an earlier time, prior to respectively assuming positions at the GVRD and with the British Columbia Ministry of Municipal Affairs (cited by Interviewees B and D, 2008). This had created a strong personal friendship, and a unique climate of trust between both parties. Such trust helped, in part, to enable the GVRD’s quiet resumption of planning activities to be negotiated somewhat collaboratively rather than in a directly confrontational manner, which might have incurred an arbitrary reaction by the Province. Moreover, provincial staff, who would typically hold their positions longer than any of their political masters69, had an interest in ensuring that British Columbia’s largest and fastest-growing urban region had the planning tools it needed to remain liveable over the long run. The combination of the latter agenda, some creeping regret by provincial politicians, and the aforementioned trust, created the preconditions for negotiated action:

\[\text{In '87 or '88 we were starting to re-introduce regional planning by stealth... to prepare the way for the possible reintroduction of regional planning. [A small group of us].... started working on this urban affairs agenda, because this}\]

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69 Even when a given party holds power throughout many elections, it is not uncommon for cabinet responsibilities (and thus ministerial positions) to change.
would be post-Expo, the economy was picking up again and government was looking at the challenge of growth....

Meanwhile, the GVRD was shell-shocked from the loss of planning, but [Interviewee D] internally was starting to get—to rebuild so voluntary, regional planning by agreement....So—[D] and I—we’re friends, we [once] worked together in Burnaby....Erik [Karlsen] was very much a part of that conversation. He was the director of the planning branch, he spent a lot of time in the Lower Mainland, talking to the Lower Mainland people, so he was in communication with [D] all the time....There was a lot of contact. So they were slowly introducing it. We were starting the conversation with government, and the government was slowly coming around to the perspective that regional planning was demanded by growth pressures. Then the GVRD came forward and said “can you do a regulation that would enable us to do voluntary regional planning”. First of all they asked for one to do a regulation on regional development services, and we gave them that and then we came back and gave them another regulation to enable voluntary regional planning. So it kind of slowly started to build up (Interviewee B).

A second critical factor related to a shift in political actors at the Provincial level. By 1986, the Vander Zalm administration had replaced Bill Bennett. Bill Vander Zalm, while also associated with the right wing Social Credit Party, was more populist and sought to ease up on some of the fiscal conservatism which had preceded his government (see Prince, 1996, especially pp. 256-259 for more discussion; also Raynor, 2000). In 1989 the Municipal Act was thus revised to explicitly allow some advisory-type “development services” (essentially a code word for long-range regional planning accepted by the provincial politicians of the day) and research to occur at the regional level. Vander Zalm arguably had a more “urban” outlook than his predecessor. It may be that Vander Zalm’s own background in Greater Vancouver politics, as former Mayor of Surrey, an outer GVRD suburb, (and that of his Minister of Municipal Affairs at the time, Rita Johnston) predisposed him to be marginally more appreciative of the Lower Mainland’s unique growth-related concerns. It also helped, as an interviewee explains, that: “[Vander Zalm was] a small business man, but he liked

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Johnston was also a former Surrey City Council member.
things to look good… so he was very positive about planning. He didn’t like regulation, but loved planning” (Interviewee B, 2008).

For another interviewee, the openness reflected in the 1989 change was also influenced by an economic upswing (i.e., the subsiding of an earlier threat) and a corresponding understanding of how regional planning could be in the Provincial interest –if kept on a tight leash:

Certainly regional planning had been a bad word since ’83, coming into this time. [But]... planning is one of those things that you can get away without doing for a while, then it begins to catch up with you—[and] in 1989 the lack of that was beginning to catch up and there were more and more issues that were beginning to rise…. So although it was a small step, it was a small step at that point in time the government was prepared to make –because they were three years into the post-Expo boom, so they were beginning to see what the indications were. The development industry was starting to come and say, ‘Well, you’ve got to get ahead of this stuff’ (Interviewee C, 2008).

What is also interesting about the latter comment is that it hints that regional planning had, prior to 1983, become part of the local political culture (see Tomalty and Alexander, 2005) and what Healey terms its “repertoires of action”, even though it was also contested. That is, numerous investments of time, resources, and credibility had been made in the GVRD plan. And when it lost its legal validity, even the development community would eventually feel its absence somewhat. This caused the latter to advocate for its legal reinstatement. While not a permanent part of the MGM network, developers were (and are) frequently drawn into it on a temporary and episodic basis as they seek to influence it from outside. They have also enjoyed a strong influence with provincial politicians (on both right and left sides of the political spectrum).
So what did the 1989 change accomplish? According to Harcourt et al (2007), the 1989 Municipal Act change recognizing regional development services was in fact helpful, because at the time, “The conventional interpretation of municipal law… was ‘if the Municipal Act doesn’t explicitly say you can do it, then you can’t do it’” (p. 130; also confirmed by Interviewee B, 2008). In fact, the 1989 amendment was proposed by Provincial staff, who were responding to a GVRD desire to legitimize its ongoing planning activities (regional planning by stealth), which had been continuing somewhat under the radar after 1983. In advancing the amendment, provincial staff aimed at providing the GVRD with a stronger political basis among its member municipalities for continuing its support functions. “That simply gave GVRD staff a basis to go to the Board and say ‘yes it is a recognized function for a regional district to do this work and therefore it’s legal to do’” (Interviewee B).

This new opening may have further recognized that the GVRD was a strong enough actor to eventually create political difficulties for the Province if its needs were overtly ignored. For even before this permission had been officially granted, the GVRD had power of its own — even if only symbolic, and perhaps personal on the part of some key staff. Its member municipalities voluntarily agreed to pay the regional district to provide regional planning advice to them. Of course, members’ willingness to do this may have been related to a keen appreciation of the GVRD’s value to them. This enabled the GVRD to begin the process of consulting and researching in preparation for another regional plan, entitled Creating Our Future. As long as regional planning powers were absent, the plan could be advisory only; yet there was a perception that the strong consensus then existing among member
municipalities would enable a voluntary implementation of the plan. According to one Provincial employee, this perception was in fact so strong on the part of the GVRD that their desire for stronger Provincial legislation had begun to subside:

> By the time we started [working on] growth strategies [the GVRD members] weren’t necessarily interested in it—we had to legislate it. They were quite comfortable with their voluntary model. We had to push them, because the NDP government which followed Vander Zalm had the reintroduction of regional planning in their platform (Interviewee B).

This completely voluntary implementation would never be truly tested; for regional planning authority shifted again when a change in provincial administration (another swing back from Social Credit to the NDP) resulted in new political actors at the helm of Provincial power with a more sympathetic attitude towards regional planning powers. Of particular interest relating to this provincial change was the background of the new premier, Mike Harcourt. Trained as a lawyer, Harcourt served on Vancouver City Council from 1973 to 1980 and as the Mayor of Vancouver from 1980 to 1986 (Harcourt et al., 2007). This placed him in a natural position to advocate for regional planning. It also suggests a heightened sensitivity to, and respect for, local knowledge at the centre of senior government power during what would be a critical time for growth management in British Columbia.

Of course, according to one provincial interviewee, the ground work for this legislation began well before the NDP took power. The suggestion was that a key set of would-be translators within the provincial Ministry of Community Development (under its old Municipal Affairs title) was well-prepared.

> We started work on regional planning in 1991 before the government changed because I went to our Assistant Deputy Minister and said: ‘it’s pretty clear that the Opposition [the NDP] is interested in regional planning, and if they came to
The same interviewee also makes frequent references to the importance of timing political change, with an earlier statement that “you have to work on a ‘winds of opportunity’ basis at the time.” Research work thus began at the provincial staff level with the preparation of issue papers, and an inventory of Provincial interests related to regional planning. By the time the new government had assumed power, work in developing the new system could proceed quickly.

Despite an organized start, provincial officials knew that resurrecting regional planning would not be an easy task, and sought to build support with an extensive consultation strategy. This began with pre-consultation interviews of over fifty key players in BC’s rapidly growing areas. It was soon followed by meetings between then Minister of Municipal Affairs Darlene Marzari and a range of local officials across the province. According to provincial staff, these meetings or “coffee klatches” helped to do two things: first, supply background on local needs with regard to a regional planning system, and second, provide “a way of … softening up people to know what to expect so it [wouldn’t be] a huge surprise when we actually came forward with some sort of regional planning system” (Interviewee A). Because the issue of regional planning was now shaping up as more of an opportunity than a threat (as it had been positioned previously) it was far more amenable to being treated through an inclusive process. This seems to be evidence of Nutt’s finding that decision makers tend to be more willing to hear from subordinates [in this case, including

\[71\] Prior to assuming her role as Member of the Legislative Assembly, and Minister of Municipal Affairs, Marzari had a long history of social activism in Vancouver civic politics. For further discussion, see Harcourt et al., 2007, Chapter 2.
subordinate levels of government], on decisions that pertain to opportunities rather than threats (1984, in Dutton and Jackson, 1987). At the same time, Provincial politicians wanted to make sure that this opportunity to re-introduce regional planning did not regress into the “threat” category. Interviewee A (2008) explains “basically our mandate from Cabinet was: introduce regional planning but don’t upset municipalities”.

In addition to the meetings, Marzari herself was instrumental in making the 1995 legislation a success. In part, this arose from her style of working collaboratively with staff – largely through dialogue, although texts were created through the process to ensure a record of decisions at various stages. In effect, some would claim that she had internalized the key elements of communicative planning. But even more significantly, Marzari was an astute politician:

*She was very good at bridging interests. So even though she was a left-wing politician, she was very comfortable going to the Vancouver Board of Trade and talking to business folks about planning and issues…. She had very highly developed personal skills, and she was very effective provincially too, in the sense that we had to go to Cabinet a number of times… and each time she knew who to talk to before the meeting to diffuse issues and deal with issues.* (Interviewee).

This ability to unite seemingly disparate interests was particularly important in navigating the new legislation through her own party. Two interviewees (B & C) have observed that, aside from the Premier, not everyone in Cabinet was interested in advancing urban land use interests. Others were focused on more rural, resource-based planning processes needing Provincial attention, aimed at addressing a “war in the woods” between logging and environmental interests, arising from the Province’s decision to permit some logging at an area called Clayquot Sound.
Related to her strong political skills, Marzari was a significant force behind the cross-fertilization of ideas between planning experts based in Greater Vancouver, and Provincial staff—a translator extraordinaire. Another interviewee explains:

She would consult a group she called the “planning elders”... all these people that she knew and she really respected, and she called them together a couple of times. They were influential people, you know, Ken [Cameron], and Brahm Weisman, Peter Oberlander, Larry Beasley, Michael Clague, Ray Spaxman, Tony Parr. She was just so connected to the Mainland, and she just knew everybody—Walter Hardwick, Marguerite Ford, she had all these people—so she would go to these meetings, and the “elders” would talk, and we would listen. It was fabulous (Interviewee B).

These ideas would then influence the direction that she gave to her own experts on staff at the Ministry. Ultimately, the extent to which Marzari’s individual skills would pave the way for developing new provincial MGM legislation reinforces the need for communicative planning theory and theories of communicative regionalism to pay greater attention to the role of individual and agency skills—both in providing for good processes and actually achieving desired outcomes.

One interesting aspect of the legislation’s development was the extent to which it both responded to the issues, and depended upon the support, of the GVRD. This provides another hint as to how the growth strategies eventually developed might have evolved more

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72 Director of Planning for the GVRD at the time.
73 Former Director of the University of British Columbia (UBC) School of Community and Regional Planning, based in Vancouver.
74 Founder of the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements at UBC
75 Associate Director of Planning for the City of Vancouver at the time the legislation was developed
76 Retired Director of Planning for the City of Vancouver when the legislation was developed, but still highly influential.
77 Director of Planning for the City of Burnaby
78 UBC Professor of Urban Geography
explicitly to further communicative regionalism. The region’s unprecedented growth was, in fact, a significant factor in creating a political rationale for the legislation:

_The nineties where the Lower Mainland was growing at 80,000 people per year... half a million people in the space of only a few years – people actually saw the change... it’s dramatically different in terms of the pace of development, in terms of panicking about land shortages and that sort of thing, so I don’t know how much longer the [provincial] government could have resisted some mechanism for regional coordination._ (Ministry of Community Development interviewee).

At the same time, the above interviewee states explicitly: “At the end of the day, we needed the GVRD to support this legislation. We needed them to tell us it was workable for GVRD…. So it was a bit of a symbiotic relationship”. Once again, provincial growth management legislation was being driven by events and perceptions in the province’s largest urban settlement. Not surprisingly, it was shaped in ways that could effectively meet the Province’s interests, particularly around tax base considerations and efficient infrastructure investments.

The conclusion of the province’s extensive consultation process on regional growth management was successful. In 1995 the _Growth Strategies Act_ was passed, which once again legitimized regional planning. But it was to be a different form of regional planning than before, with a stronger base of municipal support and buy-in than had existed in the past. This was achieved through provisions in the legislation which made the creation of a regional growth strategy or MGM plan optional, rather than mandatory. However, once a decision was made to create a regional growth strategy, that strategy needed to be accepted by all affected local governments in a particular regional district or, if not accepted, become binding after, and as specified by, the result of a dispute resolution process (British
Columbia, 1996, S. 857). Once the regional growth strategy was adopted, each member municipality was obligated to add provisions —embodied in a regional context statement (RCS)— to explain how the OCP would fulfill the regional growth strategy or would be made consistent with the growth strategy over time.

According to Interviewee C, Growth Strategies Act provisions were also intended to move MGM in the province away from land use planning, and to emphasize regional level infrastructure and service provision in ways that would then set irrevocable parameters to guide municipal land use decisions. In essence, the legislation promoted the development of growth strategy content on a voluntary basis, supported by dispute resolution procedures; but once the content was agreed to, each municipality would eventually have to comply with provisions in its own plans which explained the municipality’s role in implementing the growth strategy.

This new approach was also intended to keep local governments from becoming embroiled in some of the detailed arguments over roles and obligations with land use planning that had existed prior to 1983:

> [W]e wanted this to be regional planning that was quite distinct from local planning. So we felt very strongly that this wasn’t really a land use planning exercise. I mean, look at the purpose of the Growth Strategies [provisions as specified today in the Local Government Act] —land use planning is nowhere in there. Economic development, transportation, several other things, but land use planning was not. And the idea here was —if we could get the broad brush strokes on the map, the economic development policies, the transportation networks —address things like utility corridors, or a whole range of the broad economic infrastructure, and sort of focus at that level, then the local governments would be able to fill in the land use planning map.... Once you’ve
got those pieces, that’s what’s going to primarily generate development. And few local governments will stop, you know, the highway out there, or the transit line. Once that infrastructure is there, development will largely follow (Interviewee C).

The question, of course, would be the degree to which this new approach would be followed by regional districts and municipalities—a question to be explored further from Chapter 6 onward. For by the time growth strategies legislation was under development, some of the GVRD’s own internal support base had begun to shift. Most notably, there had been considerable debates between GVRD staff and the City of Richmond regarding the proposed exclusion of the latter from the Growth Concentration Area (GCA), a concept discussed later in Figure 6.1. While the GVRD rationalized this on the basis of Richmond’s soil conditions and significant farm land resources, Richmond was in fact a dynamic and wealthy municipality, benefiting from the presence of the Vancouver International Airport within its borders, and related spin-off employment growth. Richmond was also experiencing strong population growth during that period, largely as a result of rapid Asian immigration (see Davis and Hutton, 1989).

Besides enabling creation of new growth strategies, the Act also allowed the Minister of Municipal Affairs to declare any plans then in process growth strategies (British Columbia, 1995). The purpose of the latter provision was to once again legitimize steps already taken, recognizing work which had already been launched by the GVRD Creating Our Future process. Most importantly, the act sought to enable the creation of strategies which would provide for good regional planning with a minimum twenty-year time horizon. These strategies were not deemed mandatory, since a regional government could choose whether or
not it wanted to adopt one; however, the Minister of Municipal Affairs would reserve the right at any point in time to adopt a regulation requiring that a specific region create a regional growth strategy (RGS). In essence, the new legislation put local governments on notice that the Province could use its power to require regional planning if and when it saw fit. To date, this power has been used once in the context of the Comox Valley Regional District (British Columbia, 2008a), which is an island region not within Vancouver’s commuter shed but arguably at the edge of its urban field.

In 1996 the BC Growth Strategies Act was rolled into a revised version of the Municipal Act, retitled as the Local Government Act (LGA). A particularly interesting facet of the revised LGA – and one that remains in place today – was the way in which an adopted regional growth strategy (RGS) was to take effect. As noted above, a RGS was not prescribed as mandatory (contrasted with the regional plan requirement of the 1960s and 1970s). In other words, MGM networks as envisioned in the legislation were specifically intended to have strongly negotiated aspects at regional and municipal levels. This negotiated quality would seem to further underscore the Province’s efforts to enshrine collaborative regionalism into its MGM legislation. In essence, the negotiated provisions were intended to guide future action by members of the MGM network. They would become, in Healey’s terms, anchors for a new repertoire of action (see Chapter 2) for municipalities in managing growth collaboratively. Such repertoires were created in the hopes of countering the possibility of large degrees of interpretive drift. But the provisions would acquire power in their own right, in the sense that they possessed the capacity for causing other actions to take action (either supportive or negative) in response to them.
How exactly did the RCS work? This RCS would specify how an individual municipal plan would ultimately be consistent with, and help to implement, the regional growth strategy over the longer term. The new legislation thus explicitly recognized the role of municipal governments in implementing the regional growth strategy, and presumed that inter-municipal consensus would form the cornerstone (but not the only component) of metropolitan growth management. The legal effect, or somewhat prescriptive nature, of an adopted RGS kicked in after its highly negotiated development. The legislation further expected that municipalities would then translate the RGS’s broad provisions into locally relevant terms.

In a related vein it was clear that, even under a left-wing government which supported regional planning, there remained a strong need to respect local autonomy at its most local (i.e., municipal) level. The regional context statement was seen by Provincial staff as the ideal tool for providing the right balance:

“We knew we had to have the regional district board and some sort of approval role, or some sort of sign-off role for OCPs. But we also knew we couldn’t survive introducing legislation where the GVRD could go line by line into Vancouver’s plan and say ‘the plan for [the] Coal Harbour [neighbourhood redevelopment] just doesn’t work.’ So we had to figure out a way to have the regional government review the OCP –but not actually review it.” (Interviewee A).

Interestingly, the regional context statement also marked an important contribution to the legislation by GVRD staff. While noting that most of the legislation’s critical pieces were based on provincial research (rather than GVRD contributions), Provincial staff acknowledge that this feature came about in a brainstorming session between Provincial staff, GVRD staff.
and representatives from the Union of British Columbia Municipalities. The notion embodied in the RCS principle of municipal implementation has been apparent throughout several iterations of the GVRD’s regional plan, even before any legal requirement for Regional Context Statements existed. The essentially collaborative aspect of this notion is evident in this excerpt from a GVRD report, prior to the removal of regional planning powers:

*In adopting the Regional town centres policy the [GVRD] Board placed considerable reliance on the municipalities for implementation ... the municipalities were to be responsible for the detailed planning and implementation of the centres.... [as] the interpretation of [the regional] framework in a particular context requires local commitment and action [Cameron, 1982, p. 22].*

In addition to the regional context statement requirement, specific provisions in the growth strategies legislation regarding consultation with affected agencies were spelled out. At the same time, a dispute resolution process was described, including the ability for an affected local government to effectively agree to disagree with the RGS (British Columbia, 1995). This marked an important shift in the relationship between the Province and its local governments, providing even greater autonomy for the latter, subject to key parameters. It is perhaps not surprising that these provisions were advanced by a Premier and a Minister with extensive local government and community backgrounds, who could intuitively translate knowledge between the various levels of government and who could appreciate the need to build in permanent translation provisions in BC’s growth management legislation.

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79 The Union of British Columbia Municipalities is a non-profit agency that represents local governments throughout BC, and has done so since 1905 (UBCM, 2008).
At the same time, specific external influences helped shape the emerging legislation, both in the form of new MGM models being developed by some states in the US, and from academic literature on communicative planning. According to one interviewee:

*There were a number of comprehensive surveys of planning across the US....And from that we concluded that there [are] five or six leading models in the US. Certain threads which were in some of those case studies were very compelling, in particular collaborative and fusion models, so I kept reading the literature. In behind these interactive collaborative models, Judith Innes’s name kept coming up, both in terms of how you develop legislation and how you go about growth management in an interest-based, consensus building, and collaborative way (Interviewee B, 2008).*

The interviewee then inferred that Innes’s work helped to provide academic validation for the approach being contemplated by the nascent growth strategies legislation.

A final facet of interest in the growth strategy provisions was the requirement for a regional district to establish an Intergovernmental Advisory Committee (IAC) while developing a regional growth strategy. To some extent, the IAC resembled the earlier Technical Planning Committee or TAC which had been mandated for regional plans in pre-1983 versions of the *Municipal Act*. In essence, it too was another device to allow for ongoing translation efforts between Provincial and local actors in growth management networks. But according to one provincial interviewee, the IAC needed to be a different entity, for several reasons. First, following cutbacks under the 1980s restraint program, fewer provincial staff had been available to participate meaningfully on the previous TAC, and so the provincial coordination aspect of the latter had been suffering. Second, notwithstanding this reduced provincial input, the Technical Advisory Committees had tended to get mired down in local,
rather than regional, issues (Interviewee A). In short, the new committee needed to be structured in ways which could better bring the provincial interests to the discussion table.

A third difference, which related to the second one, was an explicit desire to have more flexibility in determining membership on individual IACs, including the ability to name specific individuals who might play a constructive role, rather than just listing their positions in statute or regulation. By allowing for more customized membership, the new IAC was also a reflection of strong political savvy on the part of the bureaucrats who wrote the legislation. Collaboration yes, but collaboration among the right group of actors on the provincial side who would possess an appropriate skill set which could both facilitate consensus and represent the appropriate formulation of provincial interest.

As described in legislation, the IAC was to be a staff-level committee comprised of regional planning staff, member municipality staff, senior provincial government representatives, and any other agencies invited to participate by the regional district board. (In the case of Greater Vancouver, the planning director of the local transportation authority was also a required IAC participant.) The purpose of the IAC as spelled out in the legislation is:

\[
\begin{align*}
(a) & \text{to advise the applicable local governments on the development and implementation of the regional growth strategy, and} \\
(b) & \text{to facilitate the coordination of Provincial and local government actions, policies and programs as they relate to the development and implementation of the regional growth strategy (British Columbia, 1996, s. 867, 2 ).}
\end{align*}
\]

But it took more than just legislation to make this a reality. According to one interviewee, then- premier Mike Harcourt was called upon to make specific commitments: that the province would speak with one voice in participating in the IAC, rather than a disjointed and
confusing array of perspectives; and that Harcourt himself would ensure that this commitment was taken seriously by all the provincial bureaucrats who served him (Interviewee A, 2008). Here again, the enshrinement of this committee as part of the plan development process suggests the evolution of a more consensual –or at least partnership orientation between the provincial government and regional districts, including Greater Vancouver. Furthermore, this more recent incarnation suggests an evolution to a more explicitly politicized approach to committee formation.

5.3.2 Regional Planning – From Stealth to Strength 1986 to 2006

In the section above, I noted that regional planning continued to occur by stealth, despite a lack of legal status. This may have been influenced in part by the continuation of a strong regional planning culture (see Tomalty and Alexander, 2005, pp. 443-444). The decision to go this route was made public little over a year after the 1983 legislation (Province Newspaper, 1985); and population pressures helped provide a strong incentive for such efforts. By 1986, it was apparent that the population-distribution goals set under the Livable Region Plan had not been met. For example, while overall regional growth to 1986 had been much slower than anticipated by the plan, growth in the outer suburbs to the south had exceeded plan targets on a proportional basis, even as inner suburbs had failed to achieve their proportional targets (Tomalty, 2002, p. 48). Work thus began on a new regional planning document, eventually known as Creating Our Future. And, as noted above, an eventual softening in provincial attitudes –combined with the high level of intra-regional solidarity demonstrated in the late 1980s helped make this work feasible. This began with
the September 1987 joint creation, by GVRD staff and members of the TAC, of a working paper which considered policies from pre-1983 MGM planning documents.

Actors all have choices to make in how to respond to the decisions of others—regardless of the apparent power differentials between them. The launch of the Creating Our Future process suggests that, at an intuitive level, regional planners, and the elected local mayors and politicians who comprised their board of directors, were keenly aware of their scope for action at the time (i.e., the relative lack of legal basis for creating a regional plan). It also suggests that the regional agency effectively recognized the power that it did possess in the form of strong ongoing local government support for regional collaboration. This power is alluded to as follows:

*The Province eliminated the official regional plan and the [regional] planning function… but it couldn’t eliminate the first Livable Region Plan, because it lived on in the hearts and minds of the municipal planners. They internalized that, they saw the needs of the whole, and the relationship of their particular part to the whole, and bought into all of that (2008 Interviewee D).*

As with the 1976 LRP, the Creating Our Future process involved an extensive program of study and dialogue between local government agencies, the GVRD, and the public at large. By 1989, with legislation passed to allow regional districts to provide regional development services and conduct related research, the GVRD Board officially launched Creating Our Future. According to a chronology by Christopherson, the retired GVRD librarian, this process began with the 1989 adoption of seven major goals:
• A region in nature;
• An economy of growth and change;
• Accessibility for people and goods;
• A healthy and safe region;
• A region of diversity and vitality;
• An equitable region; and
• An efficient region (2000, p. 67).

By 1990, an action plan had been developed to achieve those goals, entitled Creating Our Future: Steps to a More Livable Region. As with the LRP process, Creating Our Future included meetings with stakeholder groups throughout the region (GVRD, 1996a) as well as many public dialogue sessions. The process also included a two-day symposium involving all municipal elected officials and various community stakeholder groups (ibid.). The symposium was led by an academic, UBC Geography Professor Walter Hardwick, with significant local credibility and the support of then-Mayor of Vancouver Gordon Campbell, who had been the chair of the GVRD Board of Directors at the time (Harcourt et al., 2007). The sessions began with presentations by experts on various issues and trends, followed by questions and comments from attendees. Once a draft plan was created, there was extensive dialogue between GVRD staff, Campbell (in his role as board chair), and the GVRD’s member municipalities. Public discussions were held in each of six sub-regions of Greater Vancouver (GVRD, 1990); and the process included a 1990 public values survey

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80 Campbell is currently serving as the Premier of British Columbia.
modelled after a similar study done as part of the preparation for the 1976 LRP (GVRD, 1996a).

According to Interviewee D, in large part the success of this exercise owed much to Campbell’s leadership (2008, echoed by Harcourt et al., 2007). Campbell thus helped create unity during this process “by sheer force of his personality [and] simply by participating in the committee meetings [as well as being] an outstanding leader of other elected people” (Interviewee D). The interviewee also acknowledges that Campbell saw a need as “the chair of a weak regional government, [to use] processes of consensus to strengthen and empower the region”.

During this period of “unofficial” regional planning, Burnaby did much to help keep the regional vision for Greater Vancouver alive. As one former Burnaby staff member explains, this was because Burnaby saw a strong MGM strategy as good for both Burnaby and the region:

As a staff person, what I’ve heard many times from the politicians is that Burnaby is probably more than any other municipality impacted by what happens in other municipalities around GVRD and because of that, it’s important that the regional health is in order. That growth happens in places that are served by transit, for example, so people are not forced to drive through Burnaby…. Because of that, politically and at the staff level there’s been support for a structure around where growth happens in the region, and hence support of the regional plan. [and this meant that] quite a few staff resources were put into the [GVRD] plan (Interviewee E).

Burnaby’s size and clout as a major job generator for both the region and the province would have likely helped its perspective on regional matters carry weight with the provincial government. The fact that other municipalities were on board must have also helped.
After all of this work, *Creating Our Future* left two legacies that remain in place today, according to Interviewee D. The first of these was the notion of protecting working, non-urbanized lands through a concept known as the Green Zone. The second of these was the notion of placing goods movement and alternatives to the single occupant vehicle in higher priority through transportation planning. The document was an important vision.

Yet it still felt short of what many believed the region needed. When the *Creating Our Future* document was presented to the planning directors of the member municipalities at a meeting of the TAC:

*They said, “well, it’s a great vision, but it’s not a plan. It doesn’t tell us how we can accommodate the next million people and still be consistent with the values expressed in this [document]”. So I said “Do you want a plan?” And they said “Yes, we want a plan”* (Interviewee D, 2009).

Following the 1990 adoption of *Creating Our Future*, work began to translate its more vision-based content into a document with a concrete link to transportation and land use decisions (GVRD, 1996, p. 8). By the time the NDP took power in the Provincial legislature in 1991, work on *Creating Our Future* had progressed considerably for a plan which was to be purely voluntary. Its results were eventually condensed and incorporated into the Livable Region Strategic Plan (LRSP).

As it began work to develop new regional planning legislation, the Province’s assessment of regional planning to date acknowledged how essential the efforts of the GVRD and its
member municipalities had been in collaboratively getting regional planning to work—even before planning powers had been removed.

As noted in Section 5.3.1 above, once the Growth Strategies Act was passed, its provisions made it possible for the Minister of Municipal Affairs to declare the LRSP a Growth Strategy, thus giving it formal status and requiring GVRD member municipalities to meet certain commitments. Most important was the creation of a Regional Context Statement (RCS), which effectively constituted the municipality’s contract with the region and its fellow member municipalities. Creating a complete set of RCSs was in itself a major task, requiring individual negotiations between GVRD staff and the staff of each member municipality.

This negotiation process would have undoubtedly been facilitated by GVRD appreciation of the delicate power balance that existed, and an underlying desire to maintain good relations, both with the politicians and the staff of the member municipalities. When asked about how these relations could be cultivated in a general sense, Interviewee D offered the following insights:

[As a senior bureaucrat] the most important thing you can do is go to the UBCM [conference], and other functions like the Urban Development Institute\(^8\) Christmas reception, where you can get to know them on a little more personal basis. You need, if you can, to have a [political] leader in the regional level. Chair Bob Bose [a former mayor of Surrey, one of Vancouver’s large outer suburbs] was our committee chair, always willing to go around and see councils [of other member municipalities]. ….. And take the issues to their turf, go to their council meeting. Make sure it’s in their offices, not yours. The other

\(^8\) The Urban Development Institute is an agency which represents the interests of the development community in British Columbia’s major centres, including the Vancouver and Victoria metropolitan regions as well as Kelowna. It has traditionally had open and ongoing dialogues with both local politicians and local government staff.
thing is to maintain really good relationships at the staff level... so they're your allies. And you're their ally. One municipal manager said his ideal concept of GVRD staff was that they're basically an extension of municipal staff.

In creating the LRSP, negotiating RCSs, and in implementing the LRSP, technical work was guided by the GVRD Board, which ratified the work of staff and made key decisions. But before policies reached the political level of consideration, they were discussed and guided in a more hands-on way by the GVRD’s Technical Advisory Committee (TAC). The TAC had existed since the GVRD’s early days; and –at least from the provincial perspective, its mandate was altered and adjusted when the new growth management provisions took effect. In contrast, membership criteria for the IAC were much broader and did not name specific positions, unlike the pre-1983 legislation which had described the TAC mandate.

Nonetheless, TAC’s mode of operating and the relationships between municipal members of the committee remained somewhat constant, including a strong sense of leadership provided by municipal IAC\textsuperscript{82} members, most holding the positions of planning directors in their respective municipalities. One interviewee who had attended TAC meetings in the 1990s as non-management staff spoke with admiration for those individuals, referring to them as “professional with a [capital] P... [and] quite amazing folks” (Interviewee E, 2008). The same interviewee also noted that much of the consensus building needed to facilitate agreements and implementation strategies occurred away from the formal TAC table, since “the directors met frequently to share stories [about common planning problems] or strategize”. For while the regional plan itself and municipal RCSs helped chart the basic direction for plan implementation, it was recognized that further progress could be made in

\textsuperscript{82} Still referred to as the GVRD TAC at the local government’s request.
support of plan goals through other more detailed strategic guidance. Such guidance might also spell out roles and expectations for provincial agencies; and examples of this could include agreements regarding specific types of infrastructure investments (British Columbia, 2009d, p. 28).

Another important way in which GVRD staff exerted an influence over member municipalities was by providing information, which was often too costly, labour-intensive, or dependent on special skills for member municipalities to easily obtain this information on their own. For example, the GVRD coordinated a joint order of census data, including several specialized products for which it was able to obtain a discounted purchase price (author’s personal recollection while employed at the Cities of Coquitlam and Richmond respectively during the 1990s and early 2000s). GVRD staff and consultants also provided advice and guidance to help member municipalities determine the likely population and employment capacities of land uses designated in individual municipal plans (author’s personal recollection). This formed part of the GVRD’s mode of operating –and its power base:

*The GVRD has always had a very strong knowledge base to bring that was useful to the individual municipalities but also to an understanding of the whole—and anybody who wanted to do something about the whole. Like the Ministry of Transportation, when [it conducted its] Freedom to Move study under the Social Credit government, [which] found [itself] on the [regional] doorstep because [the GVRD] had the only transportation model and the only transportation database* (Interviewee D, 2008).

This knowledge base included population and employment statistics, but it also included an ability to bring member municipalities together to advance knowledge on important planning
issues and solutions. This led to joint problem-solving, and the production of several new knowledge bases including the following selected examples:

- The 2003 Ground-oriented Medium Density Housing Inventory, which compiled examples of attractive and successful infill projects throughout the region, intending to create both an awareness for politicians and community groups of well-designed (and well-received) ways of increasing densities in support of broader growth strategy goals (GVRD, 2003);

- The 2003 Regional Homelessness Strategy, which recognized the regional nature of the problem, and recommended regional supports (funded through provincial and federal programs) to assist with it (Social Planning and Research Council of British Columbia, 2003);

- The 2002 Biodiversity Conservation Strategy, which examined opportunities for protecting fish habitat and species at risk (already mandated at a high level recognized by senior government legislation) within the areas designated in the LRSP as part of the green zone (AXYS, 2002);

- The 2001 Liquid Waste Management Plan, which created a framework and standards for stormwater management based on watershed management planning, with agreements by each member municipality to abide by the standards, and to create a certain number of watershed management plans by a target date (GVRD, 2001b); and

- A 2003 study on the obstacles and challenges associated with encouraging office development in town centres designated in the LRSP (Royal LePage, 2003). This study was cost-shared with the region by the provincial government. It came up with
several interesting observations on the implementation of the LRSP, which will be
discussed further in Chapters Six through Eight.

To a large extent, with the exception of the Biodiversity Conservation Strategy and Liquid
Waste Management Plan, the creation of such studies occurred in a collaborative manner
between the GVRD and its member municipalities. The former documents included some
more overtly prescriptive aspects, largely because both projects represented the
municipalities’ and the region’s attempts to share knowledge and jointly develop strategies
for coming to grips with recently adopted (and arguably confusing) senior government
legislation related to those topics, including new legal requirements for developments to be
located away from fish-bearing streams and new federal legislation to protect species at risk
(see GVRD 2001b and AXYS 2002 for further detail). Of course, in these cases the
prescriptive elements came from the senior governments—not from the regional or municipal
governments.

Throughout the late 1990s there seemed to be a renewed sense of optimism for regional
planning. But then after the turn of the century, this optimism, and buy-in, seemed to wane.

When comparing the RGS renewal process currently underway (entitled the Sustainable
Region Initiative) to that undertaken for Creating Our Future, Interviewee E (2008) observed
“I’m not sure that this is happening this time around. And there’s a lot of reasons why it’s
not happening”. (The interviewee did not elaborate, however, on those reasons.) Later on,
this interviewee commented that relationship-building between the GVRD and its member
municipalities:
would be part of how it could be done better [today]. Because I actually think things were a bit more functional in the LRSP time then it is now. I think there’s a whole bunch of reasons for that...And I think part of it, to be really honest is—people [at both the GVRD and in member municipalities] are really busy.

During the early 2000s, there certainly was a flurry of regional activity. Much of this revolved around the highly publicized launch of a major process called the Sustainable Region Initiative, intended to renew not only the regional planning vision, but to guide GVRD corporate activities such as its utility planning functions, its fleet management, and even its purchasing policies. But it was also during this time that the first but crucial challenge to the new regional planning system was launched. Although it did not occur in Burnaby, its impacts would be felt throughout the system.

While not specifically articulated in the new legislation to enable growth strategies, GVRD staff and the staff of its member municipalities understood during the late 1990s and very early 21st century that if a community changed its plan in a way that went against its OCP, a dispute resolution process similar to that spelled out for RGS adoption-related disputes would kick in. It was thus initially assumed that strategic content areas, such as delineation of the regional Green Zone (non-developable) portions in an individual municipality, could only be changed with regional consent. In 2003, however, the City of Richmond challenged this understanding by approving a development on a large and strategically-located property in the Green Zone, raising questions regarding the enforceability of the LGA’s RGS provisions which remain ongoing. This challenge was enabled in large part by another change in the ruling provincial party. It was also likely enabled by a more recent transportation
infrastructure victory won by Richmond\textsuperscript{83}, which may have given the latter the confidence to challenge the regional board’s authority as the approver of regional context statements. When the GVRD Board refused Richmond’s application to remove a large parcel of land from the Green Zone, and requested that the provincial government invoke the dispute-resolution mechanism inferred by provincial legislation, the province refused, citing ministerial discretion (see Tomalty and Alexander, 2005, p. 46). This challenge notwithstanding, the GVRD continues to have ongoing discussions with key provincial agencies in an attempt to prevent such future challenges from succeeding in the same way (see for example Haid, 2006). Interviewee D (2008) claims that matters worsened because GVRD staff took a confrontational position by pushing matters to a head with Richmond – and then lost the battle.

5.4 Preliminary Conclusions: Communicative Regionalism at Broader Scales

A number of important events and processes took place during the post-war period of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century which would set the tone for MGM in Greater Vancouver. To begin with, flooding of the Fraser River, and the intuitive recognition of the complex social and ecological factors which produced extensive flood damage in the late 1940s, created an incentive for regional actors to collaborate on regional planning. These efforts were quickly enshrined in provincial legislation. In the province at large, given the relatively non-complex conditions that prevailed (and personal style of senior government leadership) it took until the mid 1960s for a province-wide regional planning system to be established. When it was

\textsuperscript{83} A new Skytrain line which would connect downtown Vancouver to Richmond’s City Centre and to the Vancouver International Airport (located in Richmond) was announced as part of Canada’s bid to host the 2010 Olympic Winter Games.
established, it was created in a relatively top-down manner, involving both technocratic and political influence approaches. That said, some provisions of the legislation (e.g. the required creation of a technical planning committees) planted the seeds for future development of communicative regionalism. The very existence of early provincial legislation enabling regional planning owed something to those who were able to translate knowledge, from a variety of sources and perspectives, into terms that would resonate with the power brokers of the day. Such early translators included at, the very least, an ambitious and credible Minister of Municipal Affairs and his deputy (the senior bureaucrat in that agency).

Significant instability in provincial politics, beginning with the election of the NDP in the early 1970s and creation of the ALR, occurred in tandem with the launch and culmination of the first large scale communicative planning (LRP) process in Greater Vancouver. Completion of the LRP may have heightened a sense of political confidence for the GVRD as a local agency. This particular juxtaposition of provincial political uncertainties against a regional plan completed with strong local level political support (and corresponding expectations for provincial infrastructure and related funding) would likely have helped fuel the provincial-regional conflict. Such fuel would have had a particularly incendiary effect in a province where key players were always mindful of Greater Vancouver’s population dominance relative to the rest of the province (Interviewee A). Provincial-regional conflict was then exacerbated by an externally generated economic crisis, and led to the 1983 removal of regional planning powers.
At the regional level, however, the strong multi-stakeholder relationships built during the LRP process (and cemented by politically astute regional staff and politicians) helped hold together a significant level of regional cooperation after the 1983 blow, when regional planning was abolished as a legislated requirement, and all existing regional plans were rendered legally void. Connections to provincial staff at the Ministry of Municipal Affairs also helped in this regard. That such relationships endured even after the loss of the legislative basis for MGM is testimony to the potential benefits of a communicative planning process when executed well and followed up with strong networking among the municipal stakeholders. The strength of this coalition was symbolized by local governments’ willingness to continue paying for “development services” which would no longer be used to produce or maintain a legally-recognized regional plan. Ongoing collaboration has been evident not just in the regional plans themselves, but in a number of other joint planning projects undertaken by the GVRD and its member municipalities. This has resulted in a shared knowledge base and the ongoing nurturance of a healthy regional planning culture over many decades.

Such strength, combined with rapid regional growth and more provincial political instability (successive changes of actors), set the preconditions for launching work on a new legislative framework for MGM in the province at large. Personal relationships between various actors in provincial and regional agencies also helped open doors for this work to begin. A highly-skilled minister (Darlene Marzari) who also supported communicative planning helped to bring the new framework to legal fruition, with the adoption of the 1996 Growth Strategies Act.
Changes at the provincial level once again created some instabilities in the early 21st c. This time the instabilities were manifested in an interpretation of key provisions of the legislation governing the effect of regional growth strategies which was at odds with that of regional district staff and key political representatives at the GVRD board table. Thus far, however, the legislation has held, and work is now underway to create a new regional growth strategy in Greater Vancouver launched under the banner of the Sustainable Region Initiative.

Overall, while MGM planning in the first decade of the case study period (the 1960s) could not be called communicative, since the 1970s there has been strong evidence of communicative regionalism in Greater Vancouver.
This evidence is summarized above in Table 5.5. Each plan was assessed in terms of the degree to which it did or did not meet the six criteria for communicative regionalism.

Without providing an exhaustive narrative for each plan by each criterion, the following discussion provides a general indication of how this was done.

For criterion #1 (Information), the quantity, breadth, and depth of information used in plan development was assessed along with the degree to which that information was clearly made available to public stakeholders. The 1976 LRP performed best in this regard, with detailed studies widely distributed, presented and discussed at a range of public meetings and

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84 Some critical information was not brought forward at the appropriate point in the goal formulation process.
workshops for all local elected officials. Included in this information was a market research report, based on a survey of business owners and developers, regarding barriers and opportunities to office development in the regional town centres being considered in the forthcoming plan. It is clear from some of the implementation strategies that were recommended and acted upon to some degree that this information was considered in plan development and acknowledged in the final plan (see Chapter 7 for detailed discussion of implementation actions). Conversely, while the Creating Our Future plan development took a similar approach in terms of many studies and discussions, it received a lower ranking on criterion #1 because there is no evidence of a similar barriers and opportunities study being conducted. Moreover, an industrial study (Coriolis, 1984) conducted several years prior to Creating Our Future appears to have received relatively little consideration in either discussion records or the final Creating Our Future Plan – or the LRSP. For this reason, neither plan ranked as having fully satisfied the criterion. Chance and Challenge and the 1966 ORP appeared to consider a wide range of information, but did not allow for much public value discussion, and did not appear to disseminate technical information to any meaningful degree.

For criteria #2, 3, 5 and 6, the 1966 plan was significantly formed using rational-comprehensive approaches to public stakeholder consultation and change management, although some consultation with provincial and municipal stakeholders appeared to have occurred. For this reason criteria 3, 5, and 6 are rated as only partly meeting those criteria; and criterion #2 (planner as facilitator) was not met at all because the plans placed the planners in a technical expert role, rather than the facilitators of public input. From the 1976
plan onward, the shift to a communicative approach on these variables was apparent and entrenched. As noted earlier, stakeholder participation was extensive, although even with the LRP (perhaps the most ground-breaking in this regard), later events would suggest that consultation with development and senior government interests may still have been insufficient. With criterion #4 (stakeholder involvement in implementation), all sets of plans appear to have had weak stakeholder involvement in implementation. Whereas the 1960s-era plans were weaker in this regard due to insufficient public involvement, others were weak in terms of senior government and business interests (as will be discussed further in Chapter 7). This weak involvement appears to have set up some almost entrenched deficiencies in the delivery of core plan goals. This may be what Tomalty meant when he argued that to date GVRD growth management efforts had focused on relatively easy planning victories, and that the hard work was yet to come (2002). Finally, in terms of criterion #6 (goal of consensus), for the post-1960s plans, all processes were structured with the clear extent of achieving consensus. Yet after 1983, this consensus was focused most strongly on member municipalities rather than a broader group of stakeholders—not a surprising result given the lack of legal enforcement of regional plans, at a time when municipalities still retained the ability to zone and designate future uses for lands under their jurisdiction. And, when new growth strategies legislation was introduced, the statue underscored this need for municipal acceptance.

Key findings from this chapter in relation to communicative regionalism consist of the following five points:
1. In order to set the appropriate senior government legal framework for MGM planning, the quality of the actors involved (as opposed to just the framework per se) appears to play a strong role. Beyond frequent and meaningful dialogue suggested by communicative regionalism, there is a need to involve both bureaucratic and political actors with the skills to effectively translate interests both from other agencies and from other theoretical perspectives (e.g. regarding the value of MGM) into terms that those in positions of power can appreciate. This translation process has been discussed implicitly (e.g. Yanow; also Sandercock, 2003, Chapter Eight).

Regarding the actual framework achieved, much will depend on context-specific factors, including not just the skills of actors, but the past history a jurisdiction has had with intra-metropolitan collaboration and current political attitudes regarding those past experiences.

2. Having the appropriate legal framework for communicative regionalism does not seem to guarantee that the latter will actually ensue. For over time, commitment to this framework can waver even when made explicit in legislation (e.g. via reduced or altered enforcement, as was evident in the Province’s reaction when the City of Richmond contested the Green Zone). Where the framework provides for strong region-scale controls over land uses, there is potential for support for existing frameworks to weaken when MGM activities appear to threaten senior government interests. This seemed particularly likely in a climate of political and economic instability or uncertainty. Within the British Columbia/GVRD case, there were
several major examples of relative instability arising from provincial political
struggles and shifts; economic restructuring and recession; and the general tensions
between the senior government and its dominant metropolitan region whose
population and urban levels were both growing at rapid rates during the case study
period.

In such contexts, regional and local-scale advocates of MGM activities may benefit
from paying particular attention to pressures and potential trigger points at senior
government levels, as well as proactive relationships with senior scale actors in
advance of, or as a preventative for, any instability occurring. Such relationships may
not prevent frameworks from weakening or being altered, but they can at least
provide a staging point from which to resume work in rebuilding or adapting them
appropriately. They may also wish to pay particular attention to factors influencing
senior government’s political timing –both generally and especially during significant
periods of instability.

At the intra-regional scale, even where the framework tends to emphasize vertical
consistency (that is, consistency of local plans with the vision of a regional plan,
including where the latter was developed through inter-municipal dialogue) there are
still no guarantees of constant relationship stability. For municipal actors can change
over time; and well-connected municipal actors may also be able to invoke senior
government interest (and thus senior government support) for more unilateral MGM
plan changes.
3. Somewhat mirroring point #2 above, the potential for instability at senior government levels can also open doors for renewing support for MGM activities –if information flows anchoring this renewal or generating are channelled by politically-savvy actors.

4. Communicative planning processes do present the potential for germinating and strengthening a power base from which to enable further action; but further analysis is needed to determine how and when this works. In particular, further analysis is needed of the risk of “overconfidence”, or misjudging the extent of stakeholder support for agreed provisions through the implementation phase, and how such misjudging might be prevented.

5. Overlapping with Point #4, plans which lack a strong base of stakeholder support for the implementation of key measures are even more fragile than other plans (all of which have an inherent degree of fragility). This includes support from stakeholders at senior government levels and among private sector/business interests. Further research into how to build such support would be beneficial.
Chapter 6 – The Burnaby Planning Context

Chapter 5 has discussed interagency relationships at a macro-scale, i.e., largely between senior and regional actors in fostering (and sometimes detracting from) communicative regionalism in Greater Vancouver. But it is important to recognize the micro-scale role played by municipal governments in collaborative regionalism. This chapter sets the stage for a more detailed examination of this role in the analysis of the three Burnaby employment nodes in the case study (as shown in Chapter 1 in Figure 1.1) by elaborating on the City of Burnaby’s overall planning context. The chapter begins by providing a rationale for the choice of three nodes within Burnaby as detailed MGM case study material. It then provides further detail on Burnaby as a corporate entity, with an overview of its origins, followed by a discussion of three specific facets of Burnaby’s activity relative to MGM: the development of its planning department; the evolution of its zoning bylaw; and the development of its first and second Official Community Plans, in 1987 and 1997 respectively.

6.1 Burnaby as a Focus of MGM Study

Within Greater Vancouver, Burnaby is considered an inner suburban municipality. Many other suburban neighbourhoods are located within the boundaries of the City of Vancouver, and physically much closer to the CBD or metropolitan core than Burnaby. Nonetheless, this inner suburb label connotes a difference in urban form, physical contiguity and, to some

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85 comprised of nominally single detached dwellings, although many contain secondary suites, both legal and illegal.
86 Burnaby’s location on the Burrard Peninsula means that access to the CBD does not require travel over any bridges, thereby avoiding a significant transportation bottleneck. The notion of Burnaby as an inner suburb is
extent, political attitudes, relative to other suburban municipalities located at an even greater distance from the metropolitan core. Burnaby’s suburban form might be better understood by geographers as the mark of an industrial suburb, which from an early stage had a strong economic identity and functioned as more than a bedroom community (see Smith, 2006).

Burnaby’s status as an “inner suburb” coincides with its designation in the GVRD’s current (2008) MGM strategy as part of a growth concentration area (GCA), where most of the region’s future growth is expected to occur (see map in Figure 6.1 below).

*Figure 6.1 Conceptual Diagram of GVRD Growth Concentration Area*

![Conceptual Diagram of GVRD Growth Concentration Area](image.png)

*Source: GVRD, 1996 Livable Region Strategic Plan, p. 12p. Diagram not to scale*

Within the region, Burnaby staff and politicians have had a strong role to play in the various MGM schemes for Greater Vancouver that evolved over four decades. In part, this role has

widely held in GVRD planning and political circles today, even if it may not meet traditional definitions of an inner suburb.
stemmed from Burnaby’s much longer history as a transportation link between the metropolitan core and more outlying parts of the region. An important early link in this regard was the Pioneer False Creek trail, which would eventually form the alignment for Metrotown’s main thoroughfare (Ito, 1995). (The reader will also note the presence of the TransCanada Hwy and Kingsway, both major regional thoroughfares, shown earlier on Figure 1.1). This linking role thus made Burnaby a natural candidate for a regional employment node envisioned in planned decentralization. This linking role has existed in a political sense as well, since for much of the four decades analyzed in the case study period, Burnaby has been a strong supporter of MGM and regional government. In part, such support is due to the city’s “thoroughfare” status, which crates additional traffic and related problems that residents have been eager to avoid. Since the 1970s, regional planning efforts have been framed in terms of reducing the needs for trips from suburban areas into downtown Vancouver – an approach which would also reduce pressure on Burnaby (Interview E). Burnaby has thus expended much effort on helping to translate many of the regional plan goals into on-the-ground implementation (Interviewees E and F 2008); however this point has been somewhat contested by Interviewee G, 2009, in light of issues connected with the Big Bend node’s development, discussed in Chapter 7.

Burnaby is also significant given its relative size and economic status. Today Burnaby is a mature inner suburb, home to 216,336 people as of 2007 (BC Stats, 2008) – roughly ten percent of Metro Vancouver’s total population. At the same time, it is also an economic powerhouse within the region, providing 119,950 jobs as of 2001 (Statistics Canada, 2005) and the headquarters of 24 of the region’s 100 largest firms in 2005 (Business in Vancouver
in GVRD, 2005). It is home to the British Columbia Institute of Technology (BCIT) and Simon Fraser University. As the case study will show, both institutions have anchored several senior government economic diversification strategies involving high technology. Finally, Burnaby was named the best-run city in Canada in the MacLean’s Magazine survey of local governments (MacQueen, 2009).

Within Greater Vancouver’s MGM strategy, Burnaby possesses a high profile node in the form of its Metrotown Regional Town Centre (RTC), which was flagged three decades ago as the desired location for channelled new office growth (also discussed in Chapter Four). Many visionary steps were taken over several years to promote its success in this regard; and both its array of residential towers and its park and amenity space are evidence of those efforts. Yet besides Metrotown, Burnaby possesses other more dispersed areas of employment growth, including the Big Bend and Discovery Place nodes also examined in this case study. These dispersed areas are sizeable in their own right; but their growth patterns from the late 1980s to the present day have placed them in conflict with the longstanding regional planning goal of encouraging employment concentrations (particularly in office-based agencies) in designated RTCs. This conflict will be discussed both below and in Chapters Seven through Nine.

Some of Burnaby’s dispersed employment areas emerged through the accommodation of market forces. Moreover, portions of both Big Bend and Discovery Park were launched by senior government initiatives. While the latter sought public benefit, at times the initiative worked at cross-purposes to the RTC component of regional growth management policies.
To use Hutton’s (2006) terminology, Burnaby presents evidence of intertwined market-driven employment spaces and policy-driven employment spaces. This juxtaposition is of particular interest in a case study of MGM because, among other things, it underscores the importance of understanding the aims and intents of the various actors who connect to form the MGM network for Greater Vancouver.

At the same time, Burnaby is of interest because its politicians and planning staff during the period studied were *virtuoso social actors* (to use a term coined by Flyvbjerg, 2001, and expanded upon in Flyvbjerg, 2004). A virtuoso actor is an individual who, through a combination of innate social skills and a significant amount of experience relevant to the context in which s/he acts, is able to be highly effective in pursuing his or her aims. This notion is based upon studies of human learning, which show a marked difference between rule-based understandings of any professional field (which Flyvbjerg labels the “beginner’s” form of knowledge) and more intuitive knowledge manifest in what Flyvbjerg calls the “fluid performance of virtuoso skills” (2004, p. 421). Virtuoso professional knowledge is built up, episode by episode, based on very specific place-grounded conditions. Once having acquired the latter type of knowledge, an expert in a new situation can still make a solid intuitive judgement on how to act successfully, not based merely on a knowledge of rules, but drawing from his/her intimate case-based knowledge (*ibid.*).

While the earlier rational-comprehensive approaches to planning presumed that planners’ only skills in this regard would be technical, other models of planning, including communicative, Foucauldian, and post-modern approaches appreciate that planners’
knowledge must also contain a significant political component (see, for example, Sandercock, 2003; Friedmann, 1981, 1987, 1993; Flyvbjerg, 1998, 2000, 2001, and 2004; Baum, 1983, 1987, 1996a, 1996b). By labelling Burnaby’s staff and politicians as virtuoso social actors, I am acknowledging both their technical skills as well as their innate knowledge of the value of being (and the specific contacts needed to be) well-connected to other levels of government. That is, both staff and politicians keenly understood the value and uses of their connections to facilitate the best possible technical and non-technical outcomes for their municipality under the circumstances of the day. Of course, staff concurrently understood how to create and adjust key technical instruments, such as plans, zoning and legal agreements, to suit their agenda. In doing so, they often pushed the bounds of what was permissible at the time under senior government legislation. As the case study will demonstrate, such abilities have been critical to those successes which did occur in implementing the GVRD’s MGM strategy.

6.2 Burnaby - Origins and Early Days

The territory which would evolve into the City of Burnaby did not initially have its own unique identity. Rather, its early role revolved around its situation between the two established settlements of New Westminster and Vancouver. In this regard, Burnaby’s development was strongly linked with transportation infrastructure development, much of it owing to the efforts of the Royal Engineers who arrived in the region in 1859. While Burnaby’s earliest European inhabitants arrived in the 1850s, settlement did not begin in earnest until after the 1887 completion of the Canadian Pacific Railway Terminus at Port Moody (Burnaby, 2009a; also refer back to Figure 5.1 for terminus location). It was shortly
after this time an inter-municipal tram was built between Vancouver and New Westminster. Lands along this line were subdivided and sold to residents in 1891, creating needs for services and leading to the 1892 incorporation of Burnaby as a District Municipality (op. cit).

By 1905, much of Burnaby was occupied by logging camps and company timber lease areas (see Figure 6.2 above). Several farms were also established in the southeast quadrant. (City of Burnaby, 2007a). Between 1905-1914 a provincial economic and population boom occurred, attracting immigration and causing major settlement expansions in Burnaby and other suburban areas. Sparked by further transportation improvements, such as the provision of streetcar lines (see Figure 6.3) and some road development, Burnaby grew to become larger than New Westminster by 1925 (Burnaby, 2009a).
During the 1940s and 1950s rising land prices in both Vancouver and New Westminster, coupled with growing car ownership, spurred further residential interest in Burnaby. The urban part of Burnaby had expanded to include much more of the northwest portion of the city; and it had added many new industries including an oil refinery, Lake City Industrial Park in the northeast, and Trans Mountain Pipeline Company. By the late 1950s and 1960s much of Burnaby’s ongoing residential growth had to be accommodated through apartment construction; and by the 1970s, 17 areas in the municipality had been designated for apartment development (Burnaby, 2008a). From the 1950s onward, Burnaby and other adjoining municipalities also began to collaborate on regional planning initiatives, discussed earlier. By 1976, Burnaby was also home to 39,485 jobs, or 9% of the region’s total (Burnaby, 1987, p. 11).

Figure 6.3  The Interurban Tram, With Service Between Vancouver and New Westminster

Leaving Vancouver to Head East, 1892

Photo courtesy of Burnaby City Archives
6.3 The Burnaby Planning Department

Burnaby did not gain a planning department until 1956, over six decades after the
municipality’s incorporation. (By way of comparison, the City of Vancouver’s planning
department\textsuperscript{87} was established in 1952.) In part, this was because activities such as zoning
and the development of concept plans and studies to direct future growth did not occur in a
major way until after the Second World War (see chronology in Table 6.1).

The department was created when the Engineering department realized that it could not be
responsible for long range planning as well as its infrastructure management. When the
department was created by Municipal Council, it was allocated a staff of nine, and headed by
William J. Blakely, who held that position until 1963 (BC Archival Information Network,
2007). An advisory planning commission was comprised of citizen volunteers; and the latter
helped to guide planning activities prior to the department’s formation. The commission
continued on as a sounding board for important land use decisions; and it has remained in
place to the present day, albeit with a reduced mandate compared with its early years. When
initially created, the planning department reported directly to Council on land use matters;
but in 1957 this arrangement changed when the Municipal Manager function was introduced,
and the Planning department was required to report to Council through the Municipal
Manager (\textit{op. cit}).

\textsuperscript{87} Vancouver’s first plan was created much earlier, however, by the American consulting firm Harland
Bartholomew and Associates in 1928.
While Burnaby did not adopt its first formal city wide plan until 1987, it did have a system of land use zoning (Section 6.4) much earlier. Many comprehensive planning studies were undertaken several decades prior to that time. The latter were created under the leadership of Tony Parr, who held the position of planning director from 1964 until his retirement in 1993 (BC Archival Information Network, 2007). Early studies with an important role on Burnaby’s development included a 1969 Apartment Study and a 1971 Urban Structures Report (to be discussed later – see also chronology of planning milestones on Table 6.1).

Discrete area plans were also produced in advance of a city wide plan – an approach sanctioned by the BC Municipal Act (British Columbia, 1983) which allowed (and still allows, in its current incarnation as the Local Government Act) separate area plans as an alternative, or in addition, to city wide plans. According to Thiessen (2000), many planning departments in Greater Vancouver municipalities lacked the staff and financial resources to fully cover their communities with detailed land use plans well through the 1980s and even 1990s. Thus they focused on area plans for specific precincts and neighbourhoods with critical roles to play in the municipal and/or regional urban fabric. It may also be that the existence of regional land use plans, such as the 1966 and 1980 official regional plans (which followed more conceptual plans like Chance and Challenge and the LRP) had provided a stop-gap until the 1983 elimination of regional planning powers. This was because the regional land use plans had included parcel-specific (although broad) designations up until 1983 and had, until then, helped reduce the need for city wide planning efforts.

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Interviewee G states that this did occur in another inner suburb, the City of Richmond; however, no definitive information confirming whether this occurred with Burnaby is provided. It is highly likely given that Burnaby’s first citywide OCP was not adopted until 1987 that a similar situation prevailed there as well.
Having never met Parr, from my review of the wide range of reports and documents produced during his tenure as planning director (cited throughout this dissertation), I can only conclude that he was a thoughtful and innovative planner. This impression was confirmed by Interviewee E (2008), who described him as “the most visionary planner I ever had the pleasure to work with”. As noted earlier in Chapter 5, Parr was recognized by BC Minister of Municipal affairs Darlene Marzari as one of the “planning elders” whose advice helped to inform development of Provincial Growth Strategies legislation during the 1990s.

Above Parr at the corporate level for much of his tenure was the Municipal Manager Mel Shelley who, according to Interviewee E, was extremely supportive of Parr and his department’s efforts. Working with Parr, during most of his tenure and beyond, were several other planners: Don Stenson, Jack Belhouse, Basil Lukson, and Kenji Ito (all of whom would rise to senior management positions within Burnaby City Hall). Burnaby was also a fertile training ground for planners who would later assume management positions in other jurisdictions, including Larry Beasley, who was the Associate Director of Planning for the City of Vancouver during the 1990s and early 21st Century, and Bev Grieve, the current Manager of Long Range Planning for the City of New Westminster. In addition to a strong staff complement, Burnaby Council has been strongly supportive of approved land use policy from the 1960s through the present day (Interviewee F). And, according to Interviewee F, relations between staff and Council were trusting and productive during the four decades studied in this dissertation. This image of a strong team of empowered individuals working in concert is useful background because it helps us understand the power and potential of Burnaby as a corporate actor in the creation of the three employment nodes studied here.
6.4 Burnaby’s Zoning Bylaw

As with many Greater Vancouver communities, Burnaby’s zoning bylaw preceded its plan; however, it was also one of the earliest examples of this tool in British Columbia. It was enabled in 1924 when Burnaby created what it called its Town Planning Bylaw (Wolf, 1995). The main intent of this first bylaw was to protect residential areas – particularly those inhabited by Burnaby’s wealthier citizens (ibid.). To this end the bylaw also unfortunately contained racist covenants for elite subdivisions, as with many North American cities at the time. (ibid., p. 84). That is, specific parcels of land were rendered legally unavailable to residents of First Nations or Asian (i.e., non-European) origin. By 1927 a more comprehensive zoning bylaw with greater geographical coverage replaced the original one, this time addressing commercial and industrial areas including those in the Burnaby precinct that would evolve into Metrotown – the primary suburban employment node, or RTC envisioned in the 1976 LRP (shown earlier in map in Figure 1.1). The early incorporation of this precinct into zoning coverage (compared with other parts of the municipality, which remained unzoned for a longer period of time) underscores its relative economic and social importance at a relatively early point in the 20th century.

Subsequent efforts to update the system of zoning classification were put on hold during the 1930s and early 1940s, owing to: the Great Depression of the 1930s; the bankruptcy of the municipality; and World War II. By 1946 efforts to upgrade Burnaby’s zoning were resurrected; and important new modifications made. Improvements included an expanded geographical coverage of zoning control, to cover increasing growth and development, and a
desire for new zoning categories. The latter were largely modelled after those used in the
City of Vancouver, albeit in a more simplified form (Wolf, 1995, pp. 89-90). The next major
zoning bylaw update occurred in 1965. At that time the 1946 version was replaced with a
new comprehensive bylaw, and enforcement levels were stepped up. Although many updates
and reviews have occurred since then, the 1965 document has provided the overarching
framework for today’s bylaw (ibid.).

So what does Burnaby’s Zoning Bylaw look like today? This issue is important, because it
has had significant implications for implementation of the MGM plan in its various
incarnations. Of particularly concern, which began to manifest during the mid-1980s, was
the blurring of office and light industrial uses (such as warehouses, distribution centres, and
assembly facilities, which might also incorporate large associated or auxiliary office
components) which enabled business parks outside the designated Metrotown RTC to play
competing roles as providers of the office-based employment envisioned for Metrotown in
the 1976 LRP (Interviewee E, 2008).

The general categories for zones in Burnaby have remained remarkably consistent. Burnaby
now has 23 distinct industrial zoning categories within eight broader groupings, and two
newer business centre zoning categories which are grouped under the larger industrial land
use heading. The industrial zones include such categories as Manufacturing and General
Industrial as well as Light Industrial and Advanced Technology Research. The Advanced
Technology Research zones, M8 and M8a, were specifically created for the Discovery Park /
Discovery Place area (location shown in Figure 6.1). The two zones are identical except that the M8a zone allows, in addition to

*Scientific or technological research related to:*

(a) computer, electronic, electrical, communications or similar equipment, devices or services, or

(b) chemical, pharmaceutical or medicinal materials or preparations (Burnaby, 2008c)

business or professional offices, which are not necessarily related to research and development activities (Burnaby, 2008c).

The business centre B1 and B2 zoning categories (suburban and urban office business centre) specifically allow for all types of office use except for retail service offices. They also permit the manufacturing and testing of goods and the sales of goods related to the main use (but not necessarily produced on-site) as well as a caretaker’s suite. Moreover, the provisions for this zoning category link it explicitly to a business park type of facility.

On the commercial side, 33 distinct zoning categories exist within nine broader groupings, including categories such as neighbourhood commercial, tourist commercial, community commercial, and urban village commercial. The general commercial district (C3) provides for a range of retail and consumer services as well as business and professional offices. Letters (e.g. a,b,c,d) following the C3 zoning code are used to denote specific, less palatable
activities such as amusement arcades, pawnshops, and body rub\textsuperscript{89} parlours that may occur on a limited number of sites throughout the city.

In addition to its industrial and commercial categories, another type of zoning relevant to the development of Burnaby’s employment nodes is its Comprehensive Development (CD) zoning. CD zoning might be understood in other jurisdictions as a form of “spot zoning”, or zoning customized for individual users, subject to limitations and negotiations. In the Burnaby context, this zoning has some basic provisions attached to it, including the maximum range of permitted uses allowed within a CD zone. It also contains the following unique requirement for each applicant requesting CD zoning to present the following information to Council, with the understanding that if approved, the details will become part of the zoning bylaw:

(1) A comprehensive plan, including the following:
   (a) A site plan or plans, including legal descriptions of the area to be developed, showing the location of all existing and proposed buildings, streets, lanes, highways, driveways, parking and loading areas, sidewalks, street lighting, utilities and utility easements, streams and other topographical features of the site.
   (b) Preliminary architectural plans for any proposed buildings.
   (c) Existing and proposed grades and their relation to the elevations on adjoining properties.
   (d) The location, size, height, colour, lighting and orientation of all signs.
   (e) The location and treatment of open spaces, landscaping, fences and walls.
   (f) A statement of uses.
(2) A statement of ownership of land and interest of the applicant therein.
(3) The estimated commencement date and proposed schedule of construction.
(4) A statement of financial responsibility, including the posting of bonds or cash, to assure the installation of the improvements required by the Municipality as a condition to development. (Burnaby, 2008c).

\textsuperscript{89} Sexually explicit massage services
As will be discussed in the context of the Big Bend node, Burnaby’s usage of CD zoning has had broader implications for provincial legislation impacting local government zoning powers.

### 6.5 Burnaby’s Official Community Plan and Area Plans

Both the Burnaby Apartment Study (1969) and the Burnaby Urban Structures Report (1971) would set an important foundation for conceptualizing how different parts of the city connected and operated, often referred to as its urban hierarchy. The Apartment Study looked at how to best accommodate growth in higher density forms, and which would enshrine for the first time the notion of setting a hierarchy of densities within the city as a whole. This hierarchy involved four levels, with local neighbourhood centres at the bottom and the town centre category at the top. Three municipal town centres were proposed: Brentwood, Lougheed, and a third referred to as Simpson-Sears which would eventually become the RTC known as Metrotown (see Figure 6.4 below). The Apartment Study was significant for its efforts to educate and engage with the public through a series of public meetings and newspaper advertisements, and because it also recognized the need to co-locate high density residential uses – particularly apartments – near commercial and employment facilities (Burnaby, 1977). The concept thus advanced through this report eventually evolved into Burnaby’s Four Centres Framework (Figure 6.4).
According to Interviewee E (2008), having such a framework in place has been an essential tool in helping Burnaby to manage its growth, largely because it was a logical, understandable concept to which politicians and citizens alike could agree. The same interviewee observed that planning director Tony Parr’s UK planning education had likely played a strong role in developing this concept, given its hierarchical nature both internally and as a continuation of the broader GVRD MGM strategies.

Figure 6.4 Conceptual Diagram of Burnaby’s Four Centres

Source: City of Burnaby, 2009b. Diagram not to scale.
Significant area planning efforts began in the 1970s with development of the Big Bend Area Plan and related studies (see Chapter 8), and followed by the creation of concept plans for Metrotown. Yet Burnaby did not adopt its first citywide OCP until 1987, although at least all parts of Burnaby had zoning designations by this time. It may be that with the loss of regional planning powers in 1983, and cancellation of regional land use plans then in existence, some portions of the community lacked policy direction to guide its long term future use. (See Table 6.1 for list of Burnaby’s critical citywide planning milestones in connection with events of regional significance through to 1983, and Table 6.2 for milestones from 1986 to 2006). Filling this gap left by cancellation of the regional plan may have provided Burnaby with an important impetus for doing an OCP.
Table 6.1 Chronology of Significant City-wide Burnaby Planning Milestones, 1914 to 1985

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Burnaby Milestone</th>
<th>Relevant Provincial / Regional Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1914</td>
<td>Burnaby collaborates with other local governments to form shared regional sewer and drainage service utility</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1924</td>
<td>First Burnaby zoning bylaw</td>
<td>1925 province passes law allowing zoning bylaws&lt;sup&gt;90&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1927</td>
<td>More comprehensive zoning bylaw</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930s</td>
<td>Further zoning updates on hold</td>
<td>Other GVRD area bankruptcies, e.g. North Vancouver.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1946</td>
<td>Work resumes to update zoning bylaw</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1948</td>
<td></td>
<td>LMRPB formed voluntarily, then legalized.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1952</td>
<td></td>
<td>First GVRD plan: The Lower Mainland Looks Ahead (non-binding)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1953</td>
<td></td>
<td>W.A.C. Bennett becomes Premier</td>
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<tr>
<td>1956</td>
<td>Burnaby Planning Dept. established</td>
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<tr>
<td>1963</td>
<td></td>
<td>LMRPB Chance &amp; Challenge plan (non-binding)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1966</td>
<td></td>
<td>Official Lower Mainland Regional Plan adopted, with broad, legally-binding land use designations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1969</td>
<td>Burnaby Apartment Study completed</td>
<td>LMRPB disbanded and replaced with GVRD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1971</td>
<td>Burnaby Urban Structure Report written Planning work begins for the Big Bend Area</td>
<td>Municipal Finance Authority Act adopted, boosting local and regional infrastructure borrowing abilities</td>
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<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td></td>
<td>W.A.C. Bennett loses to Dave Barrett (NDP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1973</td>
<td></td>
<td>Provincial Agricultural Land Reserve established</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1974-1982</td>
<td>Area planning work conducted for Big Bend and Metrotown; work for Discovery Place begins in 1979</td>
<td>1975 GVRD adopts RTC policy 1975 Barrett loses provincial leadership to Bill Bennett (Social Credit; son of WAC Bennett) 1976 GVRD adopts Livable Region Plan Spetifore lands decision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983</td>
<td></td>
<td>Province cancels regional planning powers &amp; plans</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Summarized by author from sources listed in Chapters 5 and 6

<sup>90</sup> Wolf lists this provincial statute date at 1923, indicating a discrepancy. Perhaps Burnaby’s zoning bylaw was started in 1924, prior to provincial authorization, in anticipation that the provincial legislation would be enacted.
In 1987, Burnaby’s OCP sought to clearly position Burnaby as a mature and important part of the metropolitan region. To this end, it articulated its main growth management goal as achieving: “A balanced land use framework that provides choice and diversity of opportunity in response to projected needs and trends while protecting and enhancing those community assets that make Burnaby a desirable place to work, live, and invest” (Burnaby, 1987, p. 26). At the time the plan was written, much of this goal relied on Metrotown as Burnaby’s RTC to generate jobs and retail activity which would then help reduce vehicle traffic movements through Burnaby en route to jobs that would otherwise be in Vancouver’s CBD (ibid., p. 23). The goal also embodied a healthy industrial base for Burnaby, accommodated through comprehensively planned, higher density industrial parks (ibid., pp. 27-28).

Based on a 1984 study done by Coriolis consultants, the expectation in the 1987 plan was for most of Burnaby’s new industrial jobs to come from firms involved in wholesale, transportation, communications and utilities (ibid., p.22).

Specific directions for achieving all of Burnaby’s main growth management goal were listed as follows:

- *Promote the growth of Burnaby Metrotown as the primary urban core and RTC for the Municipality*;
- *Promote growth in industrial and commercial areas that will contribute to the strengthening of the local economy and tax base*;
- *Encourage expansion of agricultural production within the Agricultural Land Reserve*;
- *Accommodate apartment and group housing development as the principle form of future residential growth*;
- *Promote the efficient use of available industrial lands by:*
i) the use of comprehensive industrial estates as the major form of future industrial growth;
ii) encouraging an intensification of existing industrial development.

- Recognize the Big Bend Area as the Municipality’s most significant industrial growth area;
- Promote high technology, research and development in Discovery Parks located adjacent to Simon Fraser University and the British Columbia Institute of Technology;
- Promote development within the Central Administrative and Willingdon Freeway suburban office centres... (pp. 27-28).

Several items of interest with a bearing on the case study arise from the 1987 plan. The first is a recognition in a more detailed chapter on industrial land uses that industrial land would need to be used more intensively than in the past. This change was seen as helping to prevent industrial sprawl in more outlying parts of the region to the east of Burnaby, such as Coquitlam and Surrey, or even beyond the GVRD’s boundaries and into the Fraser Valley. In essence, the OCP rationale for business parks was set in terms of Burnaby providing ongoing support for the GVRD’s broader MGM vision –not just in terms of their benefit for the municipality alone. This rationale was intended to support future decisions by Burnaby City Council to approve rezoning and OCP amendment applications which would allow business parks. (It was likely informed by significant development pressures at the time which, unfortunately, are not easily documented.) For Burnaby Council would ultimately have the decision-making authority in this regard, albeit guided by a strong city manager (staff) whose working relationship with both planning staff and the Council itself was good (Interviewee E).

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91 This site would eventually be renamed Discovery Place, likely to distinguish the site from the trust that owned it.
Second is the explicit recognition of two alternative office precincts within Burnaby, referred to as suburban business centres. These are discussed in terms which imply that they will be of lesser importance compared with Metrotown (identified as Burnaby’s primary urban core) and that they are something different. To this end, the plan states:

*These alternative suburban locations have been restricted in number to two – each of which has immediate access to the freeway and specific development criteria that reflects their suburban and complementary office development function relative to the established commercial/multi-family centres hierarchy* (1987, p. 53).

The plan provides no explanation as to the functional relationship between offices destined for “suburban” locations and those sought for Metrotown.

Third is a clear statement that retail and office uses in industrial areas may have a place, but that such a place should be clearly limited. A further part of the OCP reads as follows:

*Provision is... made for... locally-oriented commercial services within industrial areas. A final more specific commercial use accommodated... relates to office development as a principal use under the M5 (Light Industrial) zoning category. This use is incorporated principally as a transition use between heavier forms of industry and adjacent arterials and/or non-industrial land uses. It is considered likely that pressures for new forms of retail and office development in non-commercial areas will occur, particularly within lower cost industrial lands. While the Municipality will assess such market-wide trends on an objective basis, there will also be a need to ensure that these will not be prejudicial to the overall commercial structure of the Municipality* (p. 54).

In short, Burnaby saw a need to respond to changing trends and market forces, which included the rising popularity of large format or “big box” retail stores, and also tended to seek out industrial lands to take advantage of lower land prices (see Coriolis, 1993). Yet updated regional level guidance which could have helped inform how to reconcile these new trends in industrial land uses with the original 1976 RTC vision was in short supply, owing to
the 1983 provincial cancellation of all regional plans. In order to encourage capital and employment-intensive growth wherever possible, and to provide a variety of locational and business opportunities in keeping with market needs, Burnaby thus made some important up front decisions on its own about new directions for its industrial lands. Before doing so, Burnaby sought input from the GVRD before preparing its 1986 OCP about Burnaby’s role in the region, and laid out the Suburban Business Centre and Comprehensive Industrial Estate concepts in that document (Interviewee F, 2008).

Interviewee G (2009) disagrees with this interpretation, noting that the shift towards more land use flexibility for industrial areas contravened the intent of the cancelled 1980 Official Regional Plan by putting Big Bend and similar industrial precincts in a more competitive relationship with Metrotown. Even though the Official Regional Plan was no longer legally binding, Interview G implies that Burnaby should have respected the 1980 plan’s direction during the period of purely voluntary regionalism from 1983 to 1996. This perspective suggests differing expectations among regional and local actors regarding the impacts of texts like the Official Regional Plan during a time of network instability. Interviewee G also infers that, at least at a staff level, Burnaby would have been aware of the GVRD’s concerns about the proposed changes in Burnaby’s industrial land policy, even if no formal GVRD direction was provided at the board level:

There are documents from the early ‘90s leading up to the LRSP that clearly say ‘Look, this is not good regional planning to allow these things to happen’. So it certainly wasn’t news... it’s a basic tenet of regional planning when jobs can be concentrated in places that can be well-served by transit, like offices and retailing, you put them there and you leave industrial areas for the lower density employment and for making sure that
industry doesn’t have to compete with the higher order uses, because eventually you just lose your industrial areas if you do a mish-mash like Big Bend, because the higher order uses will compete with industrial uses. So there’s no planning textbook that says office parks are a model of good regional planning.

Were office parks in violation of good regional planning? Officially, there was no regional plan for Burnaby to contravene. Moreover, Burnaby’s decision to allow offices in industrial areas recognized that the office market was not stable, but had in fact evolved considerably since the previous regional plan had been developed. Not only was the trend for business parks in industrial areas strong in Greater Vancouver, it was a trend occurring throughout North America (described in Lang, 2003; also Hartshorn and Muller, 2002; and alluded to earlier in Coriolis, 1993), and in other parts of the world, including the eastern part of Germany after reunification (Weissner, 1999). As I will argue later in this dissertation, a constructive approach to addressing this trend on a regional basis would have required greater study than was perhaps possible under the political circumstances of the day. For, with additional study, constructive ways of harnessing this trend in support of broader regional trends may have been (and may yet be today) possible.

By 1997, and following the adoption of the new Livable Region Strategic Plan (LRSP), Burnaby appeared to be more committed, and not less committed to its industrial policy shifts it had begun to make in 1987. On the one hand, the 1997 Burnaby Official Community Plan continued to support the Regional Town Centres concept with the continuance of Burnaby’s four quadrant structure, and advanced it with the complementary (and regionally consistent) vision of more complete communities in each of the quadrants. For Burnaby in 1997, a complete community would achieve:
• A strongly balanced jobs to labour force ratio;
• More diverse housing opportunities and forms;
• Appropriate community facilities and services; and
• Better transportation choices for accessing important destinations (Chapter 3, p. 2)

The 1997 plan was also an important means of validating the new LRSP while still introducing caveats for Burnaby’s support, such as the provision of a second rapid transit line by 2005, and sufficient infrastructure and services for high growth areas by 2000 (Ch. 3, p. 5). (Both rapid transit lines were built by the Province, shown in Figure 6.5 below.)

Figure 6.5 Skytrain Routes in Proximity to Metrotown, Big Bend and Discovery Place Nodes

Source: Created by Anders Wong on author’s behalf.
Yet of particular interest in the 1997 plan were statements within the City’s growth management policies, reconfirming Burnaby’s decision to broaden allowable uses on industrial lands, with statements like the following:

*The City’s strategic directions for economic development opportunities must include:*

- Adapting to changing business needs in a manner that is responsive to Burnaby’s strategic advantages within the Region;....
- Making effective and efficient use of available industrial lands, seeking to attract and accommodate high quality, employment-intensive industries and overall increases in floor space densities....
- Recognizing a general merging of commercial and industrial business interests and an associated demand for the expansion of business centre opportunities to serve this need....
- A balancing of population and employment (to help reduce transportation demand at nodes that are, or could be, served by transit” (Burnaby, 1997, n.p.)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Burnaby Milestone</th>
<th>Relevant Provincial / Regional Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1986 to 1990</td>
<td>1987 Burnaby adopts first citywide OCP</td>
<td>Expo ’86 held and Skytrain (ALRT rapid transit) service connecting Burnaby to other regional destinations is established</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Bennett replaced by Bill Vander Zalm (also Social Credit)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Late 1980s “regional planning by stealth” tacitly endorsed by provincial and regional representatives</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1989 Municipal Act allows some regional development services (limited voluntary regionalism)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1990 GVRD adopts Creating Our Future (non-binding)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991</td>
<td></td>
<td>Mike Harcourt (NDP) becomes premier; provincial efforts begin on new regional planning legislation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td></td>
<td>GVRD adopts Transport 2021 (regional transit priorities). Favours advancing what would eventually become the Millennium rapid transit line, including additional service through Burnaby (see map in Figure 6.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1995</td>
<td></td>
<td>Province passes Growth Strategies Act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td></td>
<td>GVRD adopts Livable Region Strategic Plan (LRSP)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Province deems LRSP to be a growth strategy as set out in legislation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Glen Clark (NDP) replaces Harcourt as premier</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>Burnaby adopts second citywide OCP, including regional context statement (complies with growth strategies Local Government Act requirements). Includes provisions for accommodating (what will become) Millennium Skytrain line</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td></td>
<td>Millennium Skytrain project formally announced, giving Burnaby additional rapid transit service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(confirm date) Sustainable Region Initiative launched to renew regional planning &amp; guide GVRD corporate activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td></td>
<td>City of Richmond challenges LRSP by approving development in a no growth area (Green Zone) specified in LRSP</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6.6 Summing Up

As an inner suburb of Vancouver located between Vancouver and the historic settlement of New Westminster, Burnaby benefited from its role as a transportation nexus and regional employment centre from an early point in its history. Burnaby has valued planning, both to enhance local livability and to provide for regionally beneficial outcomes.

Efforts to develop an appropriate urban settlement hierarchy began in 1969, when the model of Burnaby’s four quadrants was proposed. While each of the four quadrants in the model has its own town centre, the centre for the Southwest Quadrant was designated as a RTC, a term which conveyed a significant role for the node in Greater Vancouver’s MGM efforts. As such, it was meant to embody the municipality’s higher concentrations of population, employment and retail activity. The four quadrant model remains in place today, and has continued to have a strong impact on planning policy, because it has designated four major locations within Burnaby where housing and commercial activity are to be concentrated together with public facility and infrastructure investments.

Planning efforts for Metrotown, Big Bend and Discovery Place all began at different points during the 1970s, in the absence of a formal city wide land use planning document, while benefiting from direction in the 1966 regional land use plan. Eventually Burnaby adopted its first city wide official community plan in 1987, and then updated the plan in 1997. While both versions respected the broad direction set by the relevant regional planning documents of the day, some uncertainties were expressed among some regional staff about the potential
for industrial policies in the Burnaby OCP to eventually undermine regional goals. These uncertainties will be discussed in subsequent chapters.
Chapter 7 – The Metrotown Employment Node

This chapter provides further detail on the evolution of Metrotown in its capacity as a RTC and critical regional employment node. It begins with an historical overview of major milestones in Section 7.1. Then Section 7.2 focuses in greater depth on specific efforts during the implementation of the Metrotown concept, with particular reference to employment-related matters, focusing largely on the critical period from 1976 to 1996, since little office development occurred there from 1996 to 2006 (Interviewees E and F, 2008). A short update from 1996 to 2006 is provided in 7.3. Finally, Section 7.4 concludes with a review of what the activity in the Metrotown node can teach us so far about communicative regionalism and relationships between actors in Greater Vancouver.

When you visit Metrotown you will see an array of high rise buildings combined with leafy green trees and a large, well-kept and well-used park at its western edge. These high rises are mostly residential—results of individual developers and homeowners structurally reinforcing Burnaby’s plans for encouraging high density residential in the node. You will see restaurants, hotels, and coffee shops with moderate streams of people in them during the daytime and early evening hours –evidence of the area’s vitality. On a sunny day you will catch glimpses of the distant North Shore Mountains, whose watery blue profile reminds you that you are at the heart of a coastal metropolis.
Depending on how you arrive at Metrotown, you will be struck by either the back of the shopping mall or the wide stretch of Kingsway, the precinct’s noisy arterial thoroughfare. Either way, you will notice that the automobile has a high profile in these surroundings. This is an interesting contradiction since Metrotown’s current development pattern has taken shape in concert with planning for mass transit. As shown in the map in Figure 7.2, a rapid transit line neatly bisects the area.

*Source: Burnaby, 2002, p. 1. Diagram Not to Scale. Not all GVRD member municipalities appear in this diagram*
Figure 7.2 Metrotown Planning Area Boundaries and Major Landmarks

Source: Created by Anders Wong on author’s behalf.

From the perspective of suburban infill development and growth management Metrotown has achieved some major successes, in keeping with its pivotal role in the Greater Vancouver region’s growth strategy in the mid-1970s. Metrotown’s RTC designation carried with it the expectation of attracting large shares of office and commercial space to take some pressure off the Vancouver central business district. In the early days following its RTC designation (1976), Metrotown had 470,000 sqft. retail and 620,000 sqft. office (City of Burnaby, 2002). It had roughly 6,000 jobs as of 1971, representing 14% of Burnaby’s total jobs (Spaeth,
By 2002, this inventory had grown to 3.54 million sqft. of retail and entertainment uses and 2.75 million sqft. of office space (City of Burnaby). In addition to this commercial space, nearly 5200 residential units were added during this same period, nearly doubling the residential inventory, and accommodating 28,000 residents by 2006 and 22,900 jobs, or 20% of Burnaby’s total (Metro Vancouver, 2009a). As much of this chapter will show, this quadrupling of commercial floor space in less than three decades owed much to the efforts of regional and municipal policy makers – the planners and politicians who bought into the regional town centre concept and made significant interventions in market dynamics to bring the concept to life. To use Hutton’s terminology, Metrotown is a prime example of a policy-driven space – but one that has had to make substantial concessions to certain market dynamics.

Table 7.1 Office Space Comparison – Metro and other Regional Town Centres

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1991</th>
<th>2001</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Metrotown</td>
<td>1,617,248</td>
<td>1,787,248</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richmond</td>
<td>845,167</td>
<td>875,167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lonsdale (North Vancouver)</td>
<td>783,338</td>
<td>783,338</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Westminster</td>
<td>497,775</td>
<td>537,775</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coquitlam</td>
<td>115,000</td>
<td>310,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surrey</td>
<td>30,000</td>
<td>310,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: GVRD, 2003a*
Influences of Transportation and a Central Location

While Metrotown’s RTC status was not official until 1975, several developments before that time helped give it good bones, or many of the right ingredients already in place. Of note was its contribution to Burnaby’s early identity as a transportation nexus for the settlements of Vancouver and New Westminster (discussed earlier in Chapter 6).
By the 1890s construction of a rail tramway strengthened Burnaby’s access role. The tramway included a station at the edge of Metrotown’s contemporary boundaries (see Figure 7.4 below). Land sales along the line helped bring new residents to the area (as well as the Oakalla Prison in 1912), which was still undeveloped relative to Vancouver and New Westminster. In 1913 this tram link was complemented with improved capacity for automobile access, when Kingsway—which remained until then a dirt road travelled by horse and buggy—was paved for the first time (see Figure 7.5). As Kingsway ran parallel to the tram line a distance equal to two city blocks away, an early precedent was set for separating the two modes of transportation.

*Figure 7.4*  Photo of Central Park Tram Station, circa 1920

Photograph Courtesy of the Burnaby City Archives
By 1925 the area clearly had an established residential presence, with some scattered commercial businesses largely along the western portion of Kingsway close to Central Park. There were also a few businesses near tram stops towards the eastern part of the precinct. Nonetheless, the wider area remained surrounded by farmland, including the prison farm tended by the inmates of Oakalla Prison, in the northeast portion of the area.

The Depression of the 1930s slowed down expansion in the area; and in 1933 the Municipality of Burnaby went bankrupt. From 1933 to 1942 civic affairs were managed by the provincial government, through a commissioner. Nonetheless, some new developments occurred in this decade. This included the Oak Theatre, which opened its doors to provide local entertainment in 1937. Even more significant, the Ford Motor company set up facilities on Kingsway, at the site which would eventually form part of the Metrotown Mall. This
economic coup for the area owed much to tax relief and municipal land grants. The latter involved free land given to the company by the provincially-appointed commissioner (City of Burnaby, 2008a); and such aid would constitute the first of several major market interventions in the development of Metrotown.

After WW II, there was a significant economic surge coupled with large scale population growth, benefiting Burnaby as a whole and Metrotown in particular. By 1955 the area had filled in considerably, with more residential surrounding two major transportation arteries (Kingsway and the tramline which ran parallel to it, in the right-of-way occupied today by the tracks of the Expo Line of Skytrain – refer back to Figure 7.2) and much more commercial along Kingsway. Metrotown’s population and surrounding trade area were now sufficiently large to warrant a department store – Simpson Sears. But growth was not the only type of change affecting Metrotown during this decade; for the 1950s marked the point when the automobile officially became the dominant transportation mode. This dominance occurred not just in Metrotown but throughout the Vancouver region, as in 1952 the tram line was decommissioned.

**Early Influence of Plans, Technical Knowledge, and Politics**

By the 1960s, Burnaby had grown to the extent that a portion of contemporary Metrotown had already experienced a first wave of redevelopment to low-rise, wood frame apartment buildings (Ito, 1995). Burnaby (then still a district municipality as opposed to a city)\(^{201}\)

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\(^{201}\) The distinction is partly image-based with the label of district municipality implying a rural character; however, it also has some minor significance in terms of legal powers provided by the senior government.
recognized the need for more concerted efforts to manage ongoing waves of population growth. As noted in Chapter 5, the 1963 LMRPB report *Chance and Challenge* sought to create a “series of cities in a sea of green”, which it referred to as *valley cities*. In 1966, the official regional plan built upon this concept, re-labelling the valley cities *Regional Towns*, and spelling out the importance of connecting them to each other via freeways. Burnaby’s 1969 *Apartment Study* paid significant attention to the Metrotown area, and marked an immediate response to both the regional vision and Burnaby’s own more localized growth concerns.

The 1971 *Urban Structures Report*, which outlined possible settlement patterns and density allocations in greater detail, first introduced the term *Metrotown* (albeit in plural). It defined the latter as one or more higher density nodes would make it possible to accommodate future population growth while keeping other parts of Burnaby at lower densities. The word was chosen to specifically distinguish suburban nodes from the new towns upon which plans for decentralized settlements had initially been modelled (Burnaby, 1971). The need to make this distinction shows the extent to which the UK new town concept (arising from the Abercrombie Plan) had pervaded planning consciousness at local levels throughout the English-speaking industrialized world. In part the spread of this concept was enhanced by the importation of British and UK-trained planners during the 1950s and 1960s. Burnaby Planning Director Tony Parr (who held his position from 1964-1993) was one of several British imports to the region (Interviewee E).
The Urban Structures Report explained that a metrotown should be “an integral part of the metropolitan fabric. [Metrotowns] always relate to complementary elements, such as their associated low density suburbs, the overall circulation grid, the industrial belts of the city and the green belt” (p. 64). The document also set the tone for the relationship between office and industrial employment which would guide the municipality for decades to come. It specifically advocated distinct precincts for each type of land use, much in keeping with land use plans which were typical of rational-comprehensive plans at that time, and a modernist approach to urban form (see Hirt, 2003, for further discussion of the latter). While advocating use separation, it also recognized that both RTCs and industrial belts would need to be close to settlement areas, each other, and to key transportation routes (p. 12). This relationship –largely based on the 1966 regional vision that emphasized highways as important nodal connectors-- was structurally reinforced in 1972 plans for the Big Bend Area and the implementation of the latter in the 1980s and 1990s. This reinforcement would seem to provide evidence of path dependence –not only in transportation infrastructure development (see Siemeiatycki, 2006, for discussion in the context of Skytrain planning for Greater Vancouver), but in land use relationships to that infrastructure.

As noted earlier in Chapter 5, in keeping with the regional growth management vision of the time, Metrotown was officially designated a RTC by GVRD Board policy in 1975 (one of the separate resolutions mentioned in Chapter 5 as the means of putting the Livable Region Plan’s ideas into effect). Metrotown was one of two high priority suburban centres intended to receive a substantial share of new regional growth. On the employment side, this growth was largely anticipated to assume the form of offices –ideally head offices which were to be
lured from more expensive options in Vancouver’s CBD (Spaeth, 1975; also Interviewee D). Unlike the plans of the 1960s, the Livable Region Plan advocated linking RTCs with transit, rather than just freeways and other automobile routes.

In order to assess the outcomes and processes involved in the implementation of this plan, it is useful to step back for a moment and assess the type of knowledge that contributed to relevant decisions. For it was in the Livable Region Plan that the specific notion of decentralizing offices from Vancouver’s CBD and Broadway corridor to RTCs took shape. Such an assessment is useful because key sources can include: technical and scientifically-based knowledge; knowledge shaped by the transmission of power, which is in itself highly changeable; and adjustments to both forms of knowledge as filtered by individual and organizational experiences, perceptions and translations (Richardson, 1996 and Flyvbjerg, 1998 and 2000). In a planning context, the desired planning process model will also have a significant impact on the form that knowledge can take. In rational-comprehensive planning processes, scientific and technical knowledge tends to be privileged. In communicative processes, there is ideally an openness to a much broader array of knowledge types, including the practical or everyday knowledge of affected stakeholders. The latter type of knowledge is of value, particularly when put to use in solving problems whose dimensions are familiar.

Most contemporary planning practitioners would acknowledge that the profession is more of an art than a science; nonetheless, for much of the 20th Century and up to the present day, technical and scientific knowledge has played an important role in shaping the choice of
actions embodied in, and implemented from, MGM plans like the GVRD’s Livable Region Plan and Livable Region Strategic Plan. In part this arises from the fact that these plans relate directly to building and infrastructure construction, and must take into account considerations like the suitability of soil and other environmental conditions for accommodating such elements. But the social sciences have also been an important knowledge source for planning, as witnessed by the preambles to many plans (including the 1976 GVRD plan). There is also a key input where technical and social science knowledges meet in the planning process: in the construction of population and employment projections.

Projections are critical to planning because they help provide at least some sense of the degree of new construction that may be needed at a given point in future; the size of the sewer pipe that will be needed to carry effluent away from future settlements; and the relative capacity of transportation routes and/or transit vehicles that will be needed to provide access to and from a settlement or node. Sewer, water, and transportation infrastructure are both costly and time-consuming to build. In this regard, they also require a significant level of political and administrative support to engage needed resources. As a result, this frequently yields a situation where projections for a plan become entrenched at an early stage, as the costs of re-examining the infrastructure decisions they have shaped are very high. Given such early entrenchment, there is a strong desire among both political and technical decision makers to have certainty that such large investments can actually meet future needs. Projections provide such comfort; however, they are based on the assumptions made by the technicians who create them. Often, such assumptions are based on past patterns—not

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[202] This phenomenon is also embodied in the concept of path-dependence (see Siemiatycki, 2006)
necessarily a likely future pattern. As will be discussed later, they are vulnerable to uncertainty as well as political manipulation.

To facilitate the eventual decision to encourage office decentralization to RTCs, planning staff at the GVRD had to complete planning projections regarding anticipated needs for office. Related to these projections were targets, which reflected a desired end-state (and not necessarily what was even deemed likely under certain scenarios). In 1975, the target for total jobs in each RTC was 7,000 to 10,000 jobs (Spaeth, 1976, p. 10). Detail on how these targets were created is not readily available, but such targets were formed to help estimate development capacities allowed under the Official Regional Plan at the time. Nonetheless, the targets were not based on market probabilities. In their 1985 article, Hutton and Davis argued that the office decentralization assumptions implicit in the 1975 RTC model were inappropriately applied to Metropolitan Vancouver. This was because the office decentralization scheme – developed in and applied to major world cities like London – presumed that the agglomeration economies enjoyed by office-based service sector employment could somehow be transferred to nearby suburbs without loss. At the time of the model’s application to Vancouver, while service industries were clearly beginning to outshine resource industries, Vancouver’s office agglomeration economies were still weak, particularly in relation to those services relating to head office functions (see also Hutton, 1997). This is an important gap, because it suggests that the knowledge used to guide key aspects of the 1976 MGM strategy was incomplete.
So what other knowledge influenced the LRP RTC concept? Based on materials from that planning process, and from eventual changes in plans over the years, a combination of political and market decisions impacted the vision for RTCs. Thus knowledge with a strong link to the transmission of power was also a significant shaper of earlier plans and plan implementation.

How did this happen? In initial discussion materials prepared for LRP development by GVRD staff and various consultants, only two RTCs were first proposed: an existing centre in New Westminster, and a new one in Burnaby, which would eventually become Metrotown (Spaeth, 1976). For political reasons which are not fully understood, RTCs in Coquitlam and Surrey were added next; and these new centres were eventually acknowledged in the 1980 Official Regional Plan (p 24). The choice of a RTC in Coquitlam may have seemed strange in light of the proposed site’s greenfield status at the time; however, proposals to build a large regional mall and to eventually relocate the municipal hall and other municipally-funded amenities to nearby sites owned by the municipality may have provided a strong rationale for the politicians of the day.

Eventually, following the adoption of the 1976 LRP, it became clear that two non-designated suburban centres were gaining momentum over most of the designated centres: Lonsdale in the City of North Vancouver, and the centre in Richmond, where a large regional shopping mall had been built immediately north of Richmond’s municipal hall, and where other government services like the Worker’s Compensation Board Building had already relocated
facilities to the area. This led to further adjustments to the roster of centres, as explained by 

Interviewee D (2008):

*I can personally take credit, if that’s the right term, for adding North Vancouver and Richmond to the list of RTCs because it happened during the time when [the GVRD] had no personal authority. We needed to do some new maps, and we needed all the friends we could get at the municipal level. The chairman of our board was Gil Blair [a former Richmond mayor], who kept saying “We’re the RTC that fulfils all the criteria, and yet we’re not a RTC and we don’t get rapid transit” and all that whole—proposition. I thought well, I consider Seabus to be rapid transit, so it’s connected. And so I just added Richmond and North Vancouver to the map. And then Marlene Grinell came along, Mayor of Langley Township [an outer suburb more remote from the metropolitan core than any of the other suburbs included as having RTCs], saying we want to be a RTC too. And I said “RTCs are supposed to be connected to each other by rapid transit and to the downtown, they’re supposed to be this, this, and that”. She didn’t care. I thought I could win that battle—she beat the crap out of me.

So when Langley became a RTC, there was no logic for not having Maple Ridge become a RTC. So Harry Lash’s original currency of there’ll be four, and they’ll be in the growth trajectory, certainly got watered down. That is a result, whether you would see it as good or bad, of the relational side of regional planning. And the need—that planning policies can’t be seen to be exclusively. That’s why the centres map in the regional plan has got a hierarchy of centres.

What was interesting about this episode is the blending of different forms of knowledge and political power at play in the decisions to add new RTCs to the LRSP. This knowledge began in somewhat technical form—the designation of new RTCs based on actual on-the-ground results (North Vancouver and Richmond) combined with their regional centrality and ease of providing transit access to these destinations. But it was then adjusted to reflect explicitly political knowledge bases, with the addition of more remote centres which did not yet possess the ingredients that would suggest RTC potential. In considering the politics behind the designation of the Langley RTC, it is also interesting to observe some broader dynamics surrounding GVRD membership immediately preceding Langley RTC designation.
In 1995, the Township of Langley, which had belonged to the Dewdney-Allouette Regional District since the LMRPB was broken up in 1960s agreed to join the GVRD.

By the time that the Metrotown RTC was introduced in the LRP, Burnaby had continued to grow, to the extent that the community sought to refine its understanding of the role and amenities of its town centres, especially Metrotown. One Burnaby document clearly advocates “the development of facilities to make the municipal residents less dependent upon a regional centre in Vancouver that is increasingly difficult to approach and utilize” (District of Burnaby, 1977, Part II, p. 3). At the same time, allocating more growth to a centre like Metrotown would help ease development pressures in single family neighbourhoods. It would also help create a stronger rationale for mass transit, which was now recognized as a regional necessity. In conforming to the RTC designation and translating it into locally relevant terms, Burnaby clearly supported the GVRD’s desire to create a regional order within its LRP framework.

### 7.2 A Decade of Active Intervention: 1976-1986

With the RTC concept and a renewed transit interest (entrenched in both the GVRD’s and Burnaby’s planning mindsets from 1976), the municipality could plan Metrotown in greater detail. From a regional perspective, Metrotown was given additional policy support through the 1980 Official Regional Plan for the Lower Mainland, discussed above in Chapter 5.
Burnaby eventually produced the first concept plan for Metrotown in 1978. Additional work included plans in 1981 for a small office precinct (Sub-area #14) directly northwest of the eventual mall (see Figure 7.6 below). Sub-area 14 was initially occupied mainly by single family homes with a few smaller low-rise apartment buildings. It comprised roughly 14.9 acres (6.02 ha) (Parr, 1981, n.p.) or about 2% of Metrotown’s total area or 1% of Vancouver’s CBD.

Figure 7.6 Conceptual Diagram of the 1981 Concept Plan for Metrotown’s Office Precinct (Sub-Area 14)

Source: Scanned in from Parr, 1981 (emphasis on actual sub-area added). Not to scale

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203 758 acres
204 1250 acres.
To ensure that RTCs took the suburban office node form desired in the LRP, and included amenities and features to facilitate their intended functions, attempts were made shortly after adoption of the Livable Region Plan by both Burnaby and the GVRD to intervene in various ways, including: land assembly; promoting private sector office construction and public sector office relocation; promoting rapid transit; changing parking practices; and actively discouraging competing investment elsewhere in Burnaby. Actions by the Provincial government also played a role, both in the provision of rapid transit, and as a co-shaper of the legislative framework in which this planning work would take place.

**Land Assembly**

Efforts to assemble land in the Metrotown area were instigated in direct response to a “wish list” from a 1974 survey of businesses in developing the RTC concept (Spaeth, 1975; also mentioned in Chapter Four). By eliciting such input from businesses in the first place, the GVRD and its member municipalities were temporarily including the business community into the MGM network for the purposes of translating its local knowledge into relevant findings for their growth management efforts.

The notion of land assembly (which businesses had encouraged) could be readily incorporated into both metropolitan and municipal planning frameworks at a conceptual level; but there was a recognition that there were practical obstacles to its implementation or translation in the municipal context on the ground. These obstacles revolved around the expense and logistical difficulties of purchasing many small parcels from individual property
owners. A series of land assembly proposals, and GVRD involvement in them, responded to an observation that “In most cases the municipalities do not have the staff nor the money to unilaterally assemble the land that would be required for a RTC” (Spaeth, 1975, p. 36). Ironically, in the end these efforts did eventually fall to Burnaby alone.

Not only were businesses advocating for land assembly – Municipal Planning Director Tony Parr played a large role in promoting this activity for the benefit of RTCs. Parr introduced a large scale acquisition program for Burnaby, beginning with acquisitions for parks purposes, particularly around Deer Lake (Interviewee E, 2008). And, in addition to parks:

_Part of the acquisition strategy was areas identified for growth. Metrotown was one of them.... And the idea is, that the City would acquire all the land and make it available for development.... Burnaby actually has great resources, because it’s... managed its land resources incredibly well. And in some communities it wouldn’t be possible, because they see [land assembly as having a pro-development connotation]. Burnaby said “we’re going to use our decision-making power so that we can achieve our planning goals. That was essentially [part of] Tony[‘s] vision, still there today (Interviewee E)._*

Evidence of the first steps taken to initiate a large scale program was provided in an _in camera_205 report (September 29, 1976) to Council from Burnaby Planning Director Tony Parr. The report alluded to a joint land acquisition program for Metrotown proposed by the GVRD. This program was to be enabled by a loan, whose source would actually be federal monies allocated to the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, and made available with assistance from provincial government representatives. Information on whether this loan

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205 Under the British Columbia Municipal Act, and later the Community Charter, reports from staff to a municipal council may be kept confidential or _in camera_ if they address matters relating to staffing, land acquisitions, or intergovernmental relations (British Columbia, 2003, s. 90). After several years, these reports may eventually be made available for public viewing, when the council no longer considers the release of the information harmful to the municipality’s interests.
actually came to fruition is not forthcoming, although in light of subsequent events it appears doubtful, given the direction that the newly elected Social Credit government was beginning to take. Nonetheless, what is interesting here is how the staff of all four levels of government were at least *trying* to cobble together a land acquisition program for the purpose of implementing a MGM strategy.

Such collaboration could be considered, in part, because provincial efforts in local land acquisition were not unorthodox in the 1970s. In fact, there is a record of active Provincial efforts to acquire multiple land parcels within Burnaby, both for the purpose of providing social housing and for longer term land-banking (Parr, 1973). But this provincial acquisition was occurring with the Barrett administration in the provincial legislature. Barrett’s government had already intervened in several market spheres, including the establishment of the ALR (discussed in Chapter 4) and a mandatory government-run automobile insurance program (maintained to this day). Yet by 1976 Barrett had been unseated by Bill Bennett, whose administration was less willing on principle to intervene in the market. For Bennett would eventually introduce a major “restraint” program of government cutbacks, reflecting a broader neo-conservative “meta text” which would shape the actions of politicians throughout many western democracies.

Of course, Burnaby soon recognized limits to the amount of government support available at all levels for land acquisition in Metrotown. A Burnaby draft report observed that “unlike the British new town strategy, it is not feasible… because of existing ownership patterns and

\[206\] Of course, even under the restraint program there were exceptions to this philosophy, largely centered around the development of the BC Place Stadium and False Creek lands for Expo ’86 (See Plecas, Ch 12 for further discussion).
the limited municipal fiscal situation to recommend an exclusively public undertaking” (1977, Part V, p. 1). As a result of such limits, Burnaby called for collaboration between public and private sectors in Metrotown development. It also clarified its own role in this collaboration, describing it as “Stimulat[ing] a range of action that would or would not occur under an unrestrained development situation” (Part V, p. 2). In this capacity, the report recommended taking steps to ensure that parcels which could form the cornerstone of Metrotown’s proposed development be purchased by the municipality (Part V, p. 4).

In 1978, and with Provincial support for land assembly clearly not forthcoming, a more modest land assembly approach focused on the Metrotown core was clarified, with a focus around two goals: 1) to provide civic facilities; and 2) “to enable the pre-assembly of properties centrally located within the Metrotown area in order to facilitate the decentralization of senior government facilities in the town centre” (Parr, 1978, p. 2). The strategy proposed two small-scale assemblies by the municipality of two to three acres (0.8 to 1.2 hectares) each. Within the remainder of the Metrotown core, the emphasis would be on private land assemblies, but Burnaby could choose over the longer term to facilitate the process by acquiring selected lots of strategic value in the area at reasonable prices (ibid., p. 4). In 1981 some strong local political interest in larger scale land assembly efforts remained (Burnaby, 1981, p. 2); and there was even a desire among some politicians to create a municipal corporation to undertake more aggressive development of the area (ibid. p. 3). The latter never materialized in a formal sense. Nonetheless, in 1986 the municipality was thinking somewhat like a development corporation with regard to Metrotown, by actively seeking to buy strategic sites in Sub-Area 14. Such sites were not just for civic facilities but
to provide “a stronger municipal presence through additional property ownerships in Area 14, enabling the Municipality to control the significant redevelopment potential of this area” (Parr, 1986, n.p.). Eventually some aspects of the municipal land assembly proposal were put into play, largely for the purpose of providing public amenities such as a library and public square (Parr, 1986).

There were also concerted efforts to help private owners in assembling land to further the overall Metrotown concept. In 1982, the then-owner and aspiring developer of what eventually became the *Metropolis at Metrotown Mall* was seeking to acquire adjacent properties—one of them owned and operated as an industrial facility by a major food wholesaler. A letter on file from the developer stated that the wholesaler was willing to sell its property, but needed to relocate to another site within Burnaby. The letter (attached to the report by Parr, 1982) also indicated that the wholesaler was willing to consider relocating to one of two sites—one located in the Big Bend Area and owned by the municipality, and the other with portions owned separately by the Municipality and BC Hydro (the provincial crown corporation mentioned in Chapter 5). The planning director’s report on that matter advised that relocation to either site was certainly possible:

*The lands in the Big Bend Area are solely under Municipal ownership and proposed for industrial development and, therefore, could be considered for the intended purpose. The [other site is] primarily owned by the Municipality with the balance being owned by BC Hydro... Staff has fully involved BC Hydro staff in the relocation proposal and have their full support for the principle of providing a consolidated site for the relocation of [the Metrotown] warehouse/distribution facilities* (Parr, 1982, p. 2).

But the opportunity for land acquisition to fund or encourage office development in Metrotown and other RTCs remained largely ignored by the provincial and other municipal
governments. To use Giddens’s terminology, this is evidence of a conscious refusal by such agencies to use their allocative resources in support of MGM. For example, in keeping with the (Bill) Bennett administration’s perspective of the day, there was no interest on the part of the provincial Urban Transit Authority\textsuperscript{207} in taking advantage of air rights over rapid transit stations for building or selling to another developer for either office or residential towers (Burnaby, 1981, p. 2). The Province chose not to debate or discuss its participation in land assembly with local governments.

While Burnaby and the GVRD had no ability to entice the Province into a dialogue on support for land assembly to enable MGM, weak attempts were made within Provincial circles, as evident in 1986 provincial parliamentary debates. Of particular concern in the latter were the opportunities lost to capitalize for public benefit on rising land values connected with the construction of rapid transit stations. At that time, back-bench MLA Jack Davis (of the reigning Social Credit Party) argued that:

\begin{quote}
\textit{municipalities, and on occasion other levels of government, should have a land bank policy and should be able to take advantage of the enhanced value of lands resulting from the investment of public funds, while I perhaps fault the City of Vancouver for not grasping an opportunity... [and] we don’t seem to have a mechanism at the provincial level—at least not an obvious one—for coordinating policy between Municipal Affairs and the minister responsible for transit} (British Columbia Legislature, 1986a).
\end{quote}

It was unfortunate given Davis’s experience and intelligence that his advice on this matter was articulated from a back bench position and was essentially unheeded. But it was not

\textsuperscript{207} Greater Vancouver is unique in that for many years its transit services were controlled by the senior (provincial) level of government. For further discussion, see Meligrana, 1999.
surprising in the climate of the day. It was also not surprising given the Socreds’ haste to expedite Skytrain completion in time for Expo ’86 without any undue complications\textsuperscript{208}. Moreover, a significant blemish to Davis’s reputation may have further diminished receptivity to his perspective. Davis had originally held a Cabinet post when elected to the provincial legislature, having an impressive reputation both as a Rhodes scholar and a former federal Liberal MP\textsuperscript{209}. However, in 1978 Davis was charged by the RCMP with financial improprieties for having exchanged business class airplane tickets (purchased for Provincial business) for an economy fare, and holding onto the savings. When the scandal became public, he resigned from Cabinet but kept his seat as an MLA (Plecas, 2006, p. 126). In any event, the power holders of the Bennett administration appeared to show no receptivity to his ideas (see responses by Bill Ritchie, documented in British Columbia Legislature, 1986a).

\textbf{Explicitly Promoting Private Sector Office Construction and Public Sector Office Relocation}

If land banking and assembly were ultimately not on the table for facilitating office development, stimulating private sector investment was the next best option, and appeared less likely to provoke conflict with the Province. An analysis of various reports and file documents suggests that both the GVRD and Burnaby made concerted efforts in this regard, also because they knew there was a need for more concerted plan implementation if the regional vision was to be robust. For by 1980 there was acknowledgement that efforts to

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{208}See Plecas, 2006, Chapter 12 for a discussion of the many other complications the provincial government was facing simultaneously.\textsuperscript{209} The Liberal Party of Canada is distinct from the BC Liberal Party, and has held power federally for much of the past four decades.}
date had not yet yielded the desired office developments envisioned in early articulations of the RTC concept:

*Most of the [region’s] new industrial jobs have been in suburban areas and have improved the balance of jobs to resident workers. Office employment, on the other hand, has continued to be heavily concentrated in the central area. This has contributed to a worse overall employment balance in the region, reinforcing the pattern of commuting from distant suburbs to an increasingly congested central area (GVRD, 1980, p. II)*.

From the mid-1970s both Burnaby ad the GVRD had recognized a need to actively assist the private sector in building offices in RTCs. A background document on the RTC concept indicates that such efforts were desired (see Spaeth, 1975). The same report also discussed the importance of obtaining the City of Vancouver’s collaboration in using its authoritative resources to actively *discourage* new office development in the CBD and the nearby Broadway corridor (*ibid. --see especially pp. 40-42*). Moreover, minutes from a 1982 meeting of the Downtowns Steering and Subcommittee, including several mayors, councillors and staff indicate that there remained active consideration of Vancouver’s role in pushing new office development towards designated RTCs (GVRD, 1982, n.p.). At the same time, a 1982 GVRD report (written not long before the loss of regional planning powers) proposed a program of regional action to attract RTC office space, which included collaboration with member municipalities in promoting the region’s major town centres, and enhancing business awareness of opportunities in those centres (Cameron, 1982, p. 22). This report did lead to action, as municipalities like Burnaby were asked to share costs with the GVRD for two magazine advertisements highlighting RTC development opportunities (Parr, 1983).
While positive efforts to attract offices to Metrotown were viewed either benignly or with interest, efforts to actively discourage new office construction in Vancouver’s CBD in support of regional goals were not without resistance. Qualitative research by scholar David Ley on one of the companies (BC Telephone, now merged with another telephone company and doing business as Telus) which did move to the edge of Metrotown in the early days illustrates corporate resentment and anger –particularly at Vancouver’s role in pushing office space out. In his interviews with company management, Ley observed:

> Among Tel executives, personality disagreements between the company and members of [Vancouver] city council are emphasized, and the site selected for the new head office, on the Burnaby side of the road that forms Vancouver’s eastern boundary, is seen as a taunt to the civic administration for the $750,000 of tax revenue that it loses every year” (1985, p. 34).

Such findings suggest that the growth controls needed in the City of Vancouver to facilitate RTC development came at a cost. Perhaps this type of action may have also influenced the Province’s eventual decision to withdraw regional planning powers, signifying that the costs of maintaining this particular type of regional land use control were too high.

Besides seeking private sector office construction in Metrotown, efforts were made to lure new public sector offices to all of the RTCs. This was reflected in an explicit action plan adopted by the GVRD Board in 1975, via the official direction to “Develop procedures and agreements to bring about government office decentralization to regional town centres” (GVRD Board resolution, July 9, 1975). At that time there appeared to be provincial and federal support in principle for some relocations to RTCs (Spaeth, 1975, p. 2). The City of Burnaby made its own lobbying efforts in this regard, including correspondence from
Burnaby’s mayor to the federal minister of Public Works, marketing Metrotown’s benefits and asking for federal consideration of an office relocation there (Lewanre, 1982). General support for RTC relocations was clearly evident in a federal government policy existing as recently as 1984 “that specific Treasury Board approval is required for a federal facility to be situated in a downtown rather than a suburban location” (Parr, 1984, n.p.). In essence, rather than needing the approval of just one federal cabinet minister to decide on a new office location (as would be the case for a federal office move to the suburbs), the approval of several cabinet ministers charged with ensuring overall fiscal and ethical accountability for a range of federal operations would be needed (i.e., requiring much greater effort and a very strong case for going against the policy). Thus, the policy would in theory make suburban relocation the path of least resistance. It was also evidence of a shift in ground rules being created in federal circles for federal agencies, but as a result of negotiations with lower orders of government. Of course, there may have been a federal advantage for doing so –likely the prospect of reducing costs across the board for facilities expansions by a requiring a cheaper location which the suburbs were expected to provide.

Some progress would eventually materialize in attracting office to Metrotown; but these had followed some earlier disappointments. First, an earlier attempt to relocate GVRD offices to Metrotown was unsuccessful. In 1975 there had been hopes of a ten storey building for consolidating GVRD operations in Metrotown. At the time, GVRD facilities had been split between four different buildings –three in the City of Vancouver, and one in Burnaby. But in 1975 the deal was quashed by the GVRD Board, citing costs as the rationale. According to an interview in The Province newspaper, Burnaby’s expectations for payments for municipal
services for the GVRD’s proposed building was a major impediment (Province, 1975). Eventually the proposal was resurrected several years later; and in 1984 the Metrotown Place office complex at 4330 Kingsway was completed (City of Burnaby, 2002).

Second, an opportunity for relocating federal offices for the Department of Fisheries and Oceans passed Metrotown by, to the great consternation of both Burnaby and the Polygon Development Corporation, which had recently constructed their office tower in Metrotown. In a report to Burnaby Council, Planning Director Tony Parr describes the extensive discussions held between the affected parties on this issue, as a reaction to a stated Fisheries Canada policy of meeting a forthcoming need for 10,000 square feet (930 m²) of office within the City of Vancouver. According to Interviewee E, eventually some federal offices did relocate to Burnaby; but these were along Canada Way, nearer to the Discovery Place node than to Metrotown. These non-Metrotown sites were also encouraged by Burnaby; and it would be interesting to know more about why the location near Discovery Place, with its stronger dependence on automobile commuting patterns, ended up being preferred over Metrotown.

Of course, public sector efforts would be increasingly critical during the mid 1980s, when provincial economic decline meant an overall decline in office construction throughout the region (GVRD, 1987a, p. 3). According to Interviewee E, efforts were also made to encourage BC Hydro to relocate some of its office functions to Metrotown. While this did not occur, BC Hydro did agree to move to one of Burnaby’s other four centres – Edmonds (see Figure 6.4 in Chapter 6 for location of Edmonds in relation to Metrotown). Burnaby
considered this acceptable since Edmonds was also linked into the rapid transit network; it was just two stops on the Skytrain line outside of Metrotown; and the timing of the development also helped to jump start Edmonds as another Municipal Centre.

Concurrently, there was a recognition that suburban office parks outside town centres were an upcoming competitor to RTCs for what new projects were being built outside downtown Vancouver (GVRD, 1987a, p. 25). Unfortunately, however, neither the GVRD nor its member municipalities spent sufficient energies examining and debating the regional planning implications of this competitive momentum, as suggested by the following quote from Interviewee D:

Interviewee: [A leading consultant] did a study for us, at some point, in the 90s, [on] why employment [wasn’t] happening in RTCs, and he said, ‘There just are too many more attractive employment locations [competing with the RTCs]. [Some firms in town centres] are serving adjacent employment centres, like law firms and accounting firms in New Westminster serving the forest industry – when there was a forest industry there—but there’s not very much of that kind of employment going around that’s prepared to pay the premium of higher density centres. [In the end, this consultant] forecast … the business park phenomenon…

*If one could say that the office park was the fatal blow to the employment strategy in the Livable Region proposals... in 1978, the big debate was [about] employment in downtown Vancouver [competing against] the RTCs, and there was a big hassle between Ray Spaxman210 and Gerrard [Ferry]211 over how ... the downtown was going to turn into an executive precinct and that this development would overwhelm every other function in the downtown...So we really didn’t [realize until far] too late... that the real threat [to RTCs] was the office parks... And [the consultant] may actually [forewarned us about the threat to RTCs from business parks] in his study.*

Interviewer: So why [didn’t the GVRD and others pick up on the threat of business parks]? There’s always a good reason for things.

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210 Highly influential City of Vancouver planning director of the 1970s and 1980s.
211 GVRD planning director who Cameron reported to before eventually assuming the role himself.
Interviewee: *It just didn’t seem to be on the radar screen. [Any] comprehensive studies of employment ... were seen as really being about RTC employment.*

Interviewer: *So you were focusing more on what was coming, or was predisposed to coming to the RTCs...*

Interviewee: *I do recall [the consultant] talking about ... [the need] to look at the competitive locations in the sub-regions....But I would say that at the material time when the GVRD should have had a broader understanding of the employment market, it was obsessed with downtown employment development.*

In large part, the lack of regional resiliency may have also inhibited consideration of these issues, since the GVRD was struggling to covertly maintain its planning capacities after the 1983 loss of legal powers.

**Rapid Transit Line Planning and Investment**

Since LRP adoption, the provision of rapid transit linking the RTCs to downtown Vancouver was an intrinsic part of the concept. Achieving this goal, however, was a significant challenge in light of how transit responsibilities and budgets were allocated. As noted in Chapter Four, transit had been provided by BC Hydro as a Provincial Crown Corporation until 1980. As such, servicing decisions were strongly influenced by provincial perspectives.

The Social Credit party was initially unsupportive of transit improvements when it resumed power in 1975 from the NDP, cancelling GVRD expansion plans which the latter had set in motion, and causing transit ridership to decline (Siemiatycki, 2006, p. 133). Notwithstanding this decision, it at least enabled some opportunities for local government input into regional transit decisions in Greater Vancouver in 1980 with the creation of the Urban Transit
Authority (UTA). The latter agency assumed transit planning functions from BC Hydro and provided transit services and provincial subsidies; but its enabling legislation also allowed for GVRD participation in decision-making on local transit service levels and fares, in exchange for cost-sharing in transit subsidies with the Province (Meligrana, 1999). In essence, local input was permitted to the extent that local governments also ponied up some money. But in 1983 when it lost its regional planning powers, the GVRD also lost its transit planning powers, which were allocated to BC Transit (a province-wide agency which subsumed the Urban Transit Authority). Money would not be enough to provide for adequate regional dialogue on transit and its relationship to MGM under what the Province would have perceived as trying political circumstances relative to the broader issue of regional planning.

In spite of minimal local input into transit overall, the Social Credit government did recognize their Vancouver constituents’ interests in light rail (Siemiatycki; see also Plecas, 2006). Consequently, starting in the late 1970s (when official relations with the region were still cordial), provincial-level discussions with various interest groups on the introduction of a new regional light rail system began. As part of this process, a jointly-funded study for the GVRD and what was then the UTA recommended that a link between Vancouver, Burnaby and New Westminster, and extending to other suburbs be the first investment priority.

Originally the light rail link was conceived as an at-grade system. But as Siemiatycki (2006) observes, the Provincial government’s plans changed in conjunction with its decision to host Expo ’86:

_Vancouver was set to invite the world to an exposition of modern transportation, but the city itself did not have any particularly modern_
transportation facilities... Thus, despite support for the at-grade conventional light rail option, in late 1979 and into 1980 then Minister of Municipal Affairs Bill Vander Zalm (responsible for urban transit) began to publicly reflect on exploring other technological alternatives... Vander Zalm first talked about the potential for a monorail... later his attention settled on advanced light rapid transit” (p. 137).

The new choice of technology arbitrarily narrowed an already constricted dialogue environment between provincial and local governments; and it would result in a much different impact on the urban environment, given the elevated nature of its guide way, creating some political flak in many quarters regarding noise concerns (see Siemiatycki, 2006 for further discussion). Nonetheless, there remained a general consensus that rapid transit was needed in the region; and the route extending from Vancouver to New Westminster (which would eventually include stations in Burnaby’s Metrotown) was the best option by the Province.

Arbitrary decisions notwithstanding, at the local level there was a clear desire to plan and prepare for the arrival of light rail. During drafting stages of the first Metrotown plan, Burnaby provided a copy of the document to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs (the provincial ministry then responsible for the Urban Transit Authority and thus transit planning). Burnaby’s purpose in doing so was to enable the Province to consider the Metrotown plan as part of its light rail studies (Parr, 1977a), thus taking advantage of opportunities for dialogue existing at the time. It is highly likely that several discussions ensued between the agencies on this document.
By 1982 the location of ALRT stations was being confirmed. As negotiations for the development of the western part of the Metrotown Mall (at the Kelly Douglas property) were proceeding, it is clear that Burnaby staff were also working with BC Transit to try to ensure that siting plans for one of the new ALRT stations would be compatible with what would arguably be Metrotown’s most significant development. This is evident in a memo from the mall developer’s architect which acknowledged that “Burnaby had requested BC Transit to acquire [the] Beresford Street North ROW [Right of Way] from [the] Sylvania property. This would facilitate the exchange of Sussex Ave with Beresford Street North on the Kelly Douglas Property” (Bargh, 1982). The proposed siting would result in an ALRT station and bus loop directly south of the proposed mall—a nice interface from both the developer’s and the municipality’s perspective.

Unfortunately, any influence on the ALRT line by Burnaby was minor compared with the municipality’s actual hopes. The proposal from Burnaby to move the transit alignment slightly to the north to enable a more integrated connection within the Metrotown core area did not occur, according to Burnaby staff (Interviewee F, 2008). Interestingly, there was one respect in which Burnaby’s lack of influence may have been a good thing, depending on who you ask. One provincial interviewee who had worked for Burnaby in the 1970s claimed that Burnaby had at one point wanted the LRT line to travel through Deer Lake, near the current municipal hall location, several kilometres away from Metrotown.

*City Hall is there, and a beautiful lake, and they had this prison there that they wanted to get rid of…. [the idea to have an LRT node there came from] Gerhard Sixta… [an architect – planner reporting to Tony Parr] who to his credit was always concerned about urban design and form. Wouldn’t it look great to have*
a Town centre around the lake? That would be stunning. But I worked [at that
time] as a junior person on zoning stuff with the urban development control
people. Ken Ito and a guy named Heinz Hulsbosch... [who] understood the
economics of development. We just thought that what Sixta was doing was
absurd (Interviewee B, 2008).

According to another former Burnaby staff member, the proposal for a Deer Lake transit
node and town centre may have existed, but had never been considered seriously.

*In the preparation of the 1971 document “Urban Structure”, Sixta examined
several long-range land use policies that could influence the physical structure
of the City. One of the notions that emerged was a town centre at Deer Lake.
To a large extent, it was just conceptual daydreaming. [Deer Lake] was always
seen as Burnaby’s major park and it was never seriously considered anything
other than that (Interviewee F, 2008).*

In any event, Burnaby ultimately accepted the Provincial decision to route the new Skytrain
line along Kingsway; and the municipality was making a clear link between the impending
arrival of ALRT and the launch of Metrotown as a successful node. An article from a local
newspaper provides the following quote: “‘There’s no doubt about it, Metrotown will
become the new Downtown Burnaby’ said Burnaby planner Jack Belhouse. ‘And the main
catalyst for getting the development going is rapid transit’” (*Province*, 1983). This
appreciation of the link between transit and development potential for the node appeared to
enhance Burnaby’s motivations to “play the game” effectively with the Province.

As part of its efforts to acknowledge and cater to Provincial interests, Burnaby contributed its
own funds and staff time to help integrate the new rapid transit station with a connecting bus
loop. Both this contribution, and the municipality’s ability to work effectively with the
developer (no doubt viewed positively by a Provincial administration that valued business
interests above government intervention), likely enhanced Provincial willingness to negotiate with Burnaby on ALRT planning matters. In February 1984 a municipal bylaw (No. 8156) to borrow $1 million from the municipality’s own reserve fund to buy roads for the ALRT bus exchange was given final approval (British Columbia, 1984b).

In short, while Burnaby’s scope for influencing rapid transit line planning and development was less than ideal during the crucial period in the 1980s, the municipality took every opportunity possible to influence the process to the extent possible at the time. Interestingly, today the City may have a chance to make up for that loss of influence. Plans are now underway to completely upgrade the Metrotown Skytrain station in a partnership between Translink and the City of Burnaby (Interviewee F, 2008; see also Translink, 2009).

**Changing Parking Practices**

Another important intervention in promoting Metrotown’s success related to parking, and was undertaken by the Municipality with some research assistance from the GVRD, and some (tacit) support from the development community. In 1982, one year prior to the loss of regional planning powers, the GVRD had begun work on an update to its plan, which would be shelved with the 1983 loss of regional planning powers. As part of 1982 work, the GVRD launched a study on comparable town centre developments in other jurisdictions. During that process, Burnaby was also exposed to information from those other centres. According to

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212 the regional transportation authority created in 1996, where responsibilities for transit and the construction and maintenance of regional roads and highways was handed over to more local control from the Province. See Simeiatycki (2006) for further discussion.
one interviewee (who had worked in both Burnaby and the GVRD), GVRD- instigated studies in general had a real value to municipal planning processes:

“GVRD staff were given the permission and tools to provide education and an information source to local government… the bulletins, the research around the centres –really solid, fantastic research… I still use it” (Interviewee E, 2008). Based on its own analysis of those examples (notably Metro Toronto and its growth node at Scarborough) gleaned from the GVRD work, Burnaby came to recognize that a reduction in its standard parking requirements could create further incentives for developers of all varieties of commercial space (Parr, 1982, page 4 of Appendix A).

The impetus for following through with staff’s findings in this regard came from requests from developers of two different office projects to reduce their required provision of parking spaces by 20%. Burnaby Council granted the requests in early 1982 on an *ad hoc* basis, on the condition that each developer pay the municipality $2,000 for each parking space waived. The monies were then to be used to fund the eventual construction of public parking facilities within Metrotown (*ibid.*, p. 2). A third office developer later that year made a similar request which was granted without the required contribution, but with a directive from Council for staff to create a comprehensive policy for reducing Metrotown parking standards (Parr, *op. cit*).

The end result of this directive was the adoption in November 1982 by Burnaby Council of the following parking policy:

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(1)That within the context of Comprehensive Development zoning applications for major office developments within Sub-areas 1,2,3 and 14 of Metrotown,
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developers be permitted to deposit with the municipality the sum of $3,000 for each parking space which the developer wishes to reduce from the standard parking requirement up to a maximum reduction of 20% in order to assist the municipality in acquiring and developing public parking facilities within the Metrotown area in accordance with the policy guidelines outlined in [an accompanying report]

(2) That such funds be placed in an interest-bearing Statutory Reserve Account (Burnaby, 1982).

This parking outcome is another example within the Metrotown where interagency collaboration occurred to help implement the broader MGM plan. While GVRD staff may not have specifically set out to shape the details of Metrotown parking policy, the centres study that they instigated and prepared was intended to influence those municipal actors that had designated town centres, in ways that would encourage voluntary compliance with the MGM strategy.

**Actively Discouraging Competing Investment Elsewhere**

From the above discussion, it is clear that both Burnaby and the GVRD were involved in multiple efforts to directly foster the successful development of Metrotown as a base for employment. In addition to those pro-active efforts, one important reactive effort by Burnaby also played a role in strengthening Metrotown’s RTC status. This entailed a decision in 1984 to reject a proposal by Triple Five Developments to build a three million square foot mega mall in the northwest portion of Burnaby at Lougheed Highway and Boundary Road. Triple Five Developments was owned by the Ghermezian Family which had developed the West Edmonton Mall,\(^{213}\) and the family would eventually go on to build

\(^{213}\) (long time Guiness Book of Records title holder of the world’s largest shopping and entertainment centre)
the Mall of America. Of particular interest in this rejection was its timing – immediately on the heels of the Province’s removal of regional planning powers, which would have been a reminder to all local governments of their dependence on senior government for their own existence.

Burnaby’s decision in this regard could not have been an easy one – particularly given the Provincial political and economic context at the time. After the West Edmonton Mall opened its doors in 1981, there was a lot of excitement surrounding (what was then) a novel blend of entertainment, amusement rides and shopping under a single roof. The prospective gain in property tax revenues for Burnaby at a time of economic downturn would have been significant, not to mention the possible spinoffs that might have resulted from the development. Even more challenging, however, were the developer’s efforts to bring the Provincial government into the battle, both in seeking general Provincial support as a higher level of government, and in making the proposal on lands then owned by BC Transit and BC Hydro – both provincial agencies. According to Interviewee F (2008), the proposal had apparently been made to the Provincial Cabinet without any preliminary discussion with the municipality. In theory approvals would still be needed by Burnaby to make the proposal a reality. Yet a development backed by Cabinet would have been difficult for Burnaby to refuse, in light of the Province’s 1983 decision to rescind regional planning powers, together with evidence from other jurisdictions under Common Law like Australia of a willingness for senior governments to step in where they wanted to support a development opposed by the municipality (see Sandercock and Dovey, 2002).
Burnaby only learned of the Triple Five proposal through a tip from somewhere (Interviewee F did not divulge the source). Had the Province ultimately chosen to support the Triple Five proposal, possibly by using its abilities to take another arbitrary action, Burnaby would have had little choice but to acquiesce and approve the necessary OCP changes and rezonings or suffer the consequences. At the time, considerable private and public investment had been made in Metrotown, and redevelopment momentum seemed promising. Recognizing that the Triple 5 development would have been a major impediment to Metrotown’s success, Burnaby staff immediately submitted a report to Council recommending against the proposal. “I remember the Councillors being quite upset that an end run had happened and they had been left out of the loop” (Interviewee F).

On September 24, 1984 Burnaby Council ratified staff’s opposing report by endorsing the following recommendations:

1. That Council confirm Metrotown as the priority area for major new commercial initiatives in Burnaby.
2. That council advise the Provincial Cabinet, BC Transit and BC Hydro of this confirmation and that the Triple Five proposal for a commercial/fantasyland project on a site at Lougheed Hwy and Boundary Road is unacceptable to this Municipality since it is contrary to Municipal Policies.
3. That any proposal for a major commercial/fantasyland project be located on a site within one of the designated regional town centres including Metrotown (Parr, 1984a).

Realistically concerned with how the Provincial agencies might respond to this direction, Planning Director Tony Parr wrote to BC Transit’s Assistant General Manager of Planning & Marketing (Larry Ward) to officially convey Council’s decision, and to respond to a BC
Transit Board of Directors request that its staff provide them with a realistic assessment of potential harm to transit ridership (and thus revenues) that could result if the Triple Five project went ahead. It would appear that Parr understood where a limited window of influence might exist; and in this regard he sought to link the unwanted proposal to a potential failure of one of the Province’s pet projects – Skytrain - at the time. Parr’s letter concluded that:

_The issue at hand goes far beyond the direct impact of the Triple Five proposal on the projected ALRT ridership. The more fundamental issue is the impact on the central component of the Municipality’s core area hierarchy, which is built upon the availability of public rapid transit and the need to establish a commercial and urban focus for this community. This proposal would not only preclude an active development project in Metrotown resulting in a significant employment and residential loss in the area but as well will seriously prejudice further town centre uses that follow the regional shopping centre component. It is under this scenario that the real impact on ALRT ridership should be assessed._ (Parr, 1984b).

In essence, Parr understood the importance of translation between local interests (external to the Province) and provincial interests. To this end, he did his best to arm Provincial staff with knowledge of local conditions in Burnaby that was already formulated for incorporation into the larger [Provincial] organization’s knowledge resources. He thus sought to paint a picture linking the ALRT’s success with the success of Metrotown as a Regional Town Centre, and then to state that the Triple Five proposal would ultimately harm both. While Parr was external to the provincial government, he appeared to implicitly appreciate that the internal translators within BC Hydro (with whom Burnaby dealt directly) would need the information to be already partially packaged in terms that would resonate with senior management. Perhaps others at political levels were making similar types of translation.
This would not have been surprising given the relatively close working relationships that existed at the time between members of Burnaby Council and their elected provincial representatives, or MLAs. As an outsider to this episode from the GVRD perspective, Interviewee D (2008) noted:

_The Province was involved, Elwood Veitch –‘Slim’ would have been [a cabinet] Minister and he would have been in favour of [the Triple Five proposal], I think, although Burnaby [provincial] politicians really, really respect their local council. If their council really has a problem, the Burnaby provincial politicians usually side with the council…. [even though] the council tended to be very left [compared with the more right-wing Social Credit then in power]._

Evidently the translation approach worked –somewhere along the line. While evidence into its rationale is not forthcoming, in the end, the Province accepted Burnaby’s decision and the Triple Five proposal failed to materialize as a formal application.

### 7.3 Metrotown Since 1996

With the advent of Skytrain, the Metrotown Mall redevelopment, and an extensive array of plans and strategies, residential development in Metrotown has grown at an enormous rate, as noted at the beginning of this chapter. Two hotels have been built, including a Holiday Inn Express and the most recent one –the Hilton Hotel and Convention Centre. Office growth has been much slower. The bulk of new employment-generating space has thus been retail—
typically not considered a good source of household-sustaining jobs. Conversely, light industrial and office developments in Big Bend and Discovery Place were being built during this period. New office towers were generally not forthcoming in the 1990s; and expectations have had to shift with the changing dynamics of the office market, including the reduction in head offices in the Vancouver metropolitan area. Market conditions notwithstanding Burnaby has nonetheless remained proactive, pushing when possible to get small portions of office space built as part of other mixed use developments. One example of this was the 12-storey, 159,680 sqft. (14,835 m²) 4555 Kingsway building, which is today home to BC Housing (occupying four of the twelve floors); BC Gas (since renamed Terasen, and occupying five floors); and Bosa Real Estate Ventures. The lower two levels of this structure comprise a Staples large format store accessible at grade.

As interviewee F elaborates:

_The Newmark and the Metropoint projects have five storey office components. There was also a tower built at the corner of Kingsway and Sussex –where they had planned either doing a hotel or offices on the upper floors as a second phase, so it was pre-built to allow for both; and when they abandoned the hotel proposal they just finished another eight floors of office. Given the general lack of large-scale head offices coming to the Metrotown area, the City allowed two or three mixed use projects in Metrotown, as opposed to holding out for pure office development on all core area sites. Generally speaking, within those developments, the City has required a minimum of 100,000 square feet of office along with the commercial podium._

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214 The average hourly wage in Canada for sales and service occupations in 2009 was $14.72 Cdn contrasted with an average hourly wage of $21.98 across all sectors, and for other sectors like business and finance ($20.99 per hour); health occupations ($25.47) and occupations unique to manufacturing ($18.82) (Statistics Canada, 2009b).
The extent to which new office construction has lagged behind residential has been of great concern to both the GVRD and Burnaby, as well as other municipalities with RTCs experiencing the same lag. To address this issue, in 2003 the GVRD commissioned a study by Royal LePage and CB Richard Ellis, cost-shared with the Province. It sought to determine why RTC offices were lagging, and what could be done to expedite office construction in RTCs. Reflecting provincial backing for Greater Vancouver’s MGM initiatives, this study was conducted shortly after the dot.com bust of 2001 and during a time

*Figure 7.7  Photo of The Newmark in Metrotown – Example of Mixed Use Complex*

The front portion of the building is office, with retail at grade. The complex also includes 1,600 square feet of office space provided for free to a local non-profit agency, the Burnaby Multicultural Society. The building was completed in 1997.

*Photo obtained from Metro Vancouver (former GVRD) website, 2008.*
when office vacancy rates in the region were ranging from 12% to 14% compared with retail vacancies of two to five percent.

Key findings from this work shed light on why new business parks were attracting office developers and tenants to a greater extent than the RTCs. A major challenge described in the final version of the study was the issue of higher RTC land costs and the greater property fragmentation there which could add to the costs and effort of assembling sufficient land on which to build new office space. Interestingly, such fragmentation had been anticipated in the mid 1970s – but inadequate financial resources at that time (owing to an economic crisis and a lack of buy-in to this approach by the new provincial administration, discussed earlier under Land Assembly heading) prevented the necessary action. The report also compared the costs of building office space in Metrotown to costs for Glenlyon (within the Big Bend Area), and the Willingdon Business Park (not far from Discovery Place). As shown in Table 7.2 below, Metrotown office costs were eight percent higher than in Glenlyon, and double the costs of Willingdon Business Park (GVRD, 2003, p. 7).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Destination</th>
<th>Land Cost per Buildable Square foot</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Downtown Vancouver</td>
<td>$65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metrotown</td>
<td>$40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Glenlyon</td>
<td>$37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Willingdon (Immediate vicinity of Discovery Place)</td>
<td>$20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 7.2 Comparison of Office Construction Costs, Selected Destinations*

*Source: Excerpt from GVRD, 2003, p. 7*
At the same time, with higher land costs, the report noted that developers building in RTCs would need to build at higher densities, requiring concrete high rise construction methods which were estimated to be double the expense of the steel frame construction used in most business parks with concrete costs high rises estimated at $135 to $165 per square foot compared with $70 to $85 per square foot (p. 8). This would prove a further disincentive for office construction in RTCs.

Another issue the report identified was the ability of business parks to accommodate larger floorplates with enhanced flexibility, again providing greater advantages over RTC sites (p. 13). Related to the issue of high land costs was the ability to provide large volumes of cheap surface parking on business parks, compared with high construction costs of $15,000 to $18,000 per stall of underground parking required in most RTC scenarios (compared with $1,000 per stall of surface parking) (pp. 13-14).

A final issue, which did not appear in the published (December 2003) version of the report, but which did appear in an earlier (April 2003) draft of it, was the issue of project time lines. The unpublished (April) draft observed that:

> for developers, time is the single greatest risk variable they face.... In comparison to office park developments, RTC office developments are generally much more time consuming to permit. With complex RTC land use categories, rezonings, public hearings and design panel reviews can all be required. As such, it can take between two and three years to design, permit and construct a high-rise office tower. During this time the market can change dramatically and make what appeared to be a viable project a risky venture.... In comparison, office parks provide fixed zoning in place so that buildings can be approved and constructed in as little as 10 to 14 months, a short enough time to avoid
significant changes in market conditions and to entice tenants who desire a quick turnaround time to pre-lease their space (p. 8, April 2003 version).

In short, the study found significant market impediments to adding new offices in RTCs (particularly those located in outer suburbs beyond Metrotown).

Notwithstanding these challenges, Burnaby has persisted in its efforts to encourage offices in Metrotown. The most recent coup for Burnaby has been the announcement of plans to build Metrotower III – another 400,000 sq ft. office tower on an underdeveloped portion of the mall site. Metrotower III is being built on a speculative basis (without tenants guaranteed in advance), with an expected completion date of June 2011 (Cushman and Wakefield LePage, 2009b, p. 2). As of the 4th quarter of 2008, it represents roughly one-third of all new office construction now underway within the entire region (ibid., p. 2). Ironically, however, Burnaby accounts for the lion’s share (83%) of new office construction currently underway in the region (ibid., p. 2).215 – which means that the majority of new office construction in Burnaby at present is being built outside the RTC. These non-town centre projects include one building in Discovery Place and two other buildings near (but not technically part of) Discovery Place, with a fourth significant building in another node (not studied in this dissertation) along the Millennium Skytrain line (ibid.).

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215 This is based on a total office construction figure for Burnaby of 1,065,613 square feet, and a figure of 1,291,613 for the Vancouver region. There could be some errors in the total Burnaby figure, as two major projects singled out in the Cushman and Wakefield LePage source and attributed to Burnaby may actually be in Vancouver, but near the Burnaby border. If these are in fact Vancouver projects, this would bring down Burnaby’s total office space under construction down to 805,613 sqft. and to 62% of total new regional office space construction underway.
What does the future look like? As a dynamic centre housing residential and retail, Metrotown continues to have good prospects. In terms of future office employment, there is still likely to be strong competition from sites in business parks. Nonetheless, a former Burnaby staff member has this to say:

Metrotown is relatively young and is still evolving and will continue to do so for decades to come. I recall from the time the plan was prepared in 1986, the core area transformed from the old Ford plant, Kelly Douglas warehouse, and Sylvania plant to almost six million [square feet of new construction]—and it’s all happened in twenty years. I think you have to have patience, stick with the fundamental objectives, and only change directions if you feel that there’s been a fundamental shift affecting market realities. The recent emergence of a 425,000 square foot Metrotower 3 office tower after many stalled attempts is a testimony to this approach (Interviewee F, 2008).

7.4 Taking Stock: Metrotown, Communicative Regionalism, and MGM Implementation

The narrative throughout this chapter has traced a series of milestones in the development of Metrotown as an employment node. What can these episodes, and the roles of actors and agencies involved in them, tell us about the relationship between communicative regionalism and MGM spatial outcomes? These actions are summarized in Table 7.3. As shown, in several initiatives one or more of the agencies with a role to play in implementing RTC goals shifted direction mid-way through, reinforcing the importance of appreciating how to cope with instability in MGM planning. Such directional shifts could range from withdrawing funding for, and/or agreement to participate in, a specific implementation action, (e.g.
provincial withdrawal from a previously agreed land assembly program) to taking a new action against an agreed goal (e.g. Burnaby’s decision to allow big box retail in Big Bend, as direct competition to Metrotown).

Table 7.3 Metrotown – Summary of Implementation Actions by Agency

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Burnaby / other municipal where relevant</th>
<th>Greater Vancouver Regional District</th>
<th>Provincial Government</th>
<th>Federal Government</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Market studies (1970s and 2005)</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discourage new offices in Vancouver’s CBD</td>
<td>●/■1</td>
<td>●</td>
<td>■</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local area planning &amp; zoning</td>
<td>■■</td>
<td>■■</td>
<td>■■</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land assembly</td>
<td>■</td>
<td>■■</td>
<td>■</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rapid transit line planning &amp; investment</td>
<td>■■</td>
<td>■■</td>
<td>■</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New parking practices</td>
<td>■</td>
<td>■■</td>
<td>■</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promoting new offices (public &amp; private) in Metrotown</td>
<td>■/O3</td>
<td>■■</td>
<td>■</td>
<td>■/O</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discouraging other competing investment elsewhere</td>
<td>■/ O</td>
<td>■■</td>
<td>■</td>
<td>■/ O</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- ■ = lead or shared lead in the action
- ● = supporting role
- O = significant change in direction part-way through implementation

1. This activity required that the City of Vancouver take a leadership role.
2. Initial plan development may have been assisted through a provincial planning grant, although this is not confirmed.
3. Burnaby took a strong lead in this activity for quite some time; however, in recent years this leadership has been questioned by staff at the GVRD/Metro Vancouver. At the same time, Burnaby has modified some if its expectations regarding the quantity of office space it can reasonably expect on certain sites.
4. Provincial legislation enabled this change in direction. Undetermined whether legislation preceded or followed Metrotown parking policy.
5. While several provincial offices were located in other RTCs (e.g.: Lonsdale and Richmond), they were not in Metrotown until BC Housing built in the late 1990s.
In some respects, work undertaken to plan and develop Metrotown highlights aspects of communicative regionalism which have worked well in Greater Vancouver. For example, the highly participatory 1976 LRP provided for some detailed feasibility studies, intended to enhance the public vision’s implementation potential, thereby boosting the chances of positive spatial outcomes. By virtue of their focus on RTCs, they were directly linked to Metrotown. Because such studies contained information which later assisted Metrotown’s development, they could arguably be said to have helped enable the spatial outcomes sought. In this regard, the studies helped to elaborate public goals in ways which would make them more amenable to action. These studies were themselves communicative, as opposed to purely technical, in that they involved information sharing and debates before they were finalized; and they also involved consultation with key stakeholders (e.g. developers and the business community). The studies had important weaknesses, however, in that they did not consider the challenges posed to strategies for decentralization nodes which had already been observed (by the time of LRP development) by Daniels (1975); Goddard (1975); and, to a less direct extent, by Hall et al (1973).

It is also clear that Burnaby as a relevant municipal stakeholder not only contributed to the MGM plan’s development, but was also prepared to implement it –at least in terms of the efforts focused within Metrotown per se.216 The Metrotown concept plans developed by Burnaby following LRP adoption demonstrated that the municipality embraced the LRP vision for its RTC, and then translated, or made the vision Burnaby’s own through, more

216 Others, including Interviewee G, have argued that Burnaby’s actions in Big Bend and Discovery Place created conflict with the MGM plan.
detailed planning. In this respect the plans were evidence of fulfillment of criterion #4, stakeholder involvement in implementation (among the indicators for assessing communicative regionalism in MGM). A more detailed example of communicative regionalism working well at the implementation level occurred when Burnaby reduced parking standards in Metrotown as part of a cash-in-lieu program. Given that this approach had been new to Burnaby, the municipality benefited significantly from the GVRD’s study of RTCs in other Canadian cities, which included information on reduced parking standards near rapid transit nodes. This is an example of ongoing information exchange beyond the plan development phase assisting with stakeholder involvement in plan implementation. But this parking example also demonstrates how certain positive forms of instability (e.g., the potential for desired intensification) may facilitate experimentation and openness to creating new ground rules (e.g. reduced parking standards for cash-in-lieu).

A further example of how Metrotown’s planning and development helped to implement MGM plans, in a manner which both demonstrated and reinforced communicative regionalism, occurred during the 1990s in connection with the issue of office attraction. It began with Burnaby’s pragmatic response to instability, in the form of a lagging office market in Metrotown in the 1990s, when Burnaby continued to implement the (communicatively-derived) LRSP by relaxing, but not abandoning, its requirement for office floorspace on certain key Metrotown development sites. This at least allowed development to occur with some net increases in office floorspace (otherwise hampered by a weak downtown office market), through projects like the Newmark shown earlier in Figure 7.7, which included at least some office space, even if the bulk of the building was used for
residential purposes. The alternative to not allowing the Newmark could have been a vacant site or derelict building. This pragmatic turn was eventually followed in 2003 by a collaborative study between member municipalities (including Burnaby), the GVRD, and the Province (which shared half the costs) to pinpoint market-based issues and opportunities for RTCs in Greater Vancouver (Royal Lepage, 2003). The 2003 study epitomizes the type of stakeholder information exchanged envisioned in communicative regionalism as a means of building at least a shared problem definition as an initial step towards appropriate problem responses.

Yet what is also interesting about the 2003 study is that it demonstrates the selective and sporadic involvement of developers and business-owners throughout the history of MGM planning in Greater Vancouver. Developers and information about market realities were essentially excluded from regional conversations about spatial goals between 1996-2003\(^\text{217}\). This partial “exclusion” may have simply been the result of resource constraints in the face of competing priorities. It may also reflect a certain awkwardness about involving developers and market realities too frequently and too explicitly in any planning process, particularly given the very real fears of other stakeholders that developers’ interests will dominate.

Notwithstanding such fears, however, businesses are major stakeholders in any planning process, and if the latter aren’t involved up front, business interests will still shape metropolitan form but not necessarily in the manner desired by stakeholders, since businesses

\(^{217}\text{It appears that dialogue with developers and business owners has significantly increased in recent years –see Chapter 7 for more discussion.}\)
decide whether or not to build or locate on a site in the first place.\textsuperscript{218} The issue of developer/business involvement raises two interlocked questions for advocates and scholars of communicative regionalism: how does one gauge the right stakeholders to involve at the right time? In other words, if we assume that growth management occurs through a network, what can be done to ensure that network boundaries remain flexible in ways that promote stakeholder involvement at the right point in time? And, when it is not appropriate and/or feasible to involve them, how do you at least ensure their perspective is appropriately represented at the discussion table? Surely to some extent an in-depth, context-specific appreciation of local power dynamics and interests is required to respond to this question. But further elaboration of how and when to involve stakeholders possessing what appear to be inordinately greater resources (allocative and authoritative) is clearly needed. And the implicit presumption in earlier communicative planning scholarship that a planner-facilitator can make these calls on their own in ways that achieve progressive ends is both naïve and problematic (Huxley, 2000).

This leads to another perspective on events in Metrotown’s development, which also suggests that there are examples within that node of, at best, something beyond communicative regionalism going on (that is, something not adequately captured in the principles of communicative regionalism), and at worst, evidence of breakdowns in communicative regionalism. Of particular interest in this regard was the issue of land assembly to facilitate RTC development shortly after the LRP was adopted, where arguably a breakdown in communicative regionalism occurred. The reader will recall that the proposed

\textsuperscript{218} In essence, a site may be zoned to allow office development, but if no one is interested in building offices there, the site will remain without offices.
assembly program was to have been cost-shared between senior and local levels of government. But by 1978 it was clear that any land assembly monies would have to come from Burnaby alone. Thus, while Burnaby continued to be involved in this aspect of regional plan implementation (albeit with reduced expectations for results), other key stakeholders were not prepared to fulfill what were apparently prior commitments to this aspect of the plan. This raises the question of what else was impacting regional plan implementation. And it is here where the ANT precept of the inherent instability of organizations and networks sheds further insight (and where communicative planning theory has not yet articulated sufficient insights for planners). Clearly there was a significant degree of political instability at the provincial level preceding and immediately following the change in provincial commitment to land assembly. More case studies which highlight this issue of organizational and network instability for MGM processes and outcomes would be of value in this regard, particularly where the instability was addressed in a manner beneficial to MGM goals.

On the matter of land assembly, which was considered quite crucial at the time to RTC development, Burnaby essentially had to go it alone, because at some point senior government priorities shifted (a type of event which could be included in Healey’s notion, referenced earlier in Chapter 2, of “interpretive drift”). The NDP provincial administration under Dave Barrett may have been committed to helping with land assembly. Yet by the time the Social Credit provincial administration was elected (led by Bill Bennett), and then had a chance to clarify its own agenda, it was clear that the land assembly program was incompatible with the more anti-Keynesian platform which the Social Credit had espoused.
under their new leader. Not only is this episode an example of how instability can impact MGM processes and outcomes, it also illustrates another ANT precept surrounding the importance of texts as key agents in their own right. For the episode demonstrates how an influential meta-text at the Provincial level—neoclassical economics and Thatcherism—was used to justify certain provincial actions and to thus also impact relationships between actors in MGM and, ultimately, on outcomes.

Another example of other modes of action used (outside the scope of communicative regionalism) involved provincial government planning for Skytrain and Burnaby’s efforts in facilitating Skytrain stations within Metrotown. Pre-1983 discussions between the Province, the region, and member municipalities surrounding the provision of light rail transit did value information exchange between government agency staffs; and the 1980 formation of the Urban Transit Authority (in which the GVRD was a partner) conveyed some support for ongoing regional involvement in transit decisions. Moreover, the final alignment of the Skytrain route reinforced LRT goals of linking the two most significant RTCS (Metrotown and New Westminster) via rapid transit to Downtown Vancouver as well as other more suburban destinations. Yet decisions around the technology chosen and detailed station location, as well as integration with the surrounding urban fabric, were not shaped by the overriding goal of consensus, or even by the LRP goals in place at the time (Siemiatycki, 2006). Rather, they were driven by the broader needs and priorities of the Province as the senior government agency and primary project funder (possessor of both authoritative and allocative resources, to use Giddens’s terms). This suggests that the stakes for Skytrain planning may have been too high for the Province to have been willing to undertake a fully
communicative approach on this project (particularly after the 1983 removal of regional planning powers). What is also interesting is that Burnaby recognized this “high stakes” situation and was able to adapt by “playing the game” to some extent with its more powerful provincial cohorts (by 1983, BC Transit). It did so by channelling its own funds and staff time (allocative power resources) to provide for a bus exchange at one of the Metrotown area Skytrain stations. I see Burnaby’s response in this episode as evidence of municipal politicians and staff exercising their capabilities as *virtuoso social actors*—responding to the provincial power play by marshalling their own allocative power to the extent possible to ensure that at least some of their organization’s needs (if not the full wish list) could be met.

In essence, the municipality perceived the breakdown in communicative regionalism and chose to work around it. Drawing from the social learning perspective of Wildemeersch et al (1998), Burnaby clearly appreciated that it lacked the competencies (financial and authoritative) to provide citywide bus service to the new skytrain station on its own. The municipality therefore used what competencies it possessed (in terms of land resources and staff time) to cooperate with the Province in ensuring better transit connections than residents might have had without that cooperation.

A third example of non-communicative modes of action taking place involved Burnaby Council’s 1984 statement of opposition to the Triple Five Development proposal for a competing mega-mall on land owned by a provincial crown corporation. In light of the Province’s 1983 removal of regional planning powers—a clear demonstration of its strength and authoritative resources—Burnaby Council’s opposition took courage. On the one hand, it could be construed as an ongoing effort
to help implement the MGM plan (i.e., as an ongoing example of communicative regionalism at work). But I believe that the timing of Burnaby’s awareness of the proposal --when opportunities still existed to mobilize appropriate levers of influence with the Province (i.e., to ensure that the Province hadn’t locked itself into a position, from which it might need to “punish” Burnaby for opposition) made a big difference to the end result. And this information came to Burnaby covertly, through a personal connection of some sort. This is an example of a network providing a behind-the-scenes base of power for action –another precept of ANT, but also a notion that has been advanced within an expanded communicative framework by Innes and Booher (2002). Yet considered in light of Dredge’s (2006) observations that networks can work in negative ways as well, this suggests that further research leading to a typology of possible network uses of power-bases in a growth management context would be of value.

Another episode of interest in this regard surrounds the agreement at the GVRD Board level and within the City of Vancouver to help bolster RTC office nodes by discouraging new office construction in Vancouver’s central area. It was no doubt hoped that achieving such regional-level agreement would bring about the desired results and lead to a more stabilized repertoire of action (to use Healey’s term) surrounding the development approvals process (from here on in, no more new large office complexes will be approved in Vancouver). However, the response by BC Telephone to this particular “repertoire” (described by Ley, 1984) shows that the development and business community were not fully on board. They definitely did not see themselves as part of the MGM network in this instance; and in fact
saw the MGM network’s activities in this respect as contrary to their own interests, and would have had strong motivation to work against the MGM interests. Conversely, planners and politicians of the GVRD and its member municipalities presumed that they had achieved a greater degree of stability around the RTC goals of the LRP than actually existed. While the business community was not a permanent member of the MGM network, it was sufficiently involved in this aspect of the MGM strategy that its lack of buy-in to this decision --and its significant resources for taking action to impact MGM outcomes -- would eventually hasten the weakening of MGM activities by 1983.

A final example of significant non-communicative action occurred where major lobbying efforts were made to convince the federal government to promote office relocations to the RTCs, and particularly to Burnaby’s Metrotown. As noted earlier, these efforts eventually resulted in a federal policy requiring more cumbersome Treasury Board approval for any new federal office developments not destined to RTCs, which were preferred in the policy. This was an apparent commitment secured through communicative dialogue, from a more powerful stakeholder to help with plan implementation. Yet this commitment was clearly not as solid as hoped either; for it was possible for the Department of Fisheries and Oceans to subsequently circumvent its own policy about an upcoming relocation, stating that it would only consider a new location in Vancouver (rather than a RTC). While Surrey would benefit from the eventual federal agency conformance to this policy, through relocation of Revenue Canada’s regional income tax processing centre to the area near its King George Skytrain Station, federal office space has remained absent from Metrotown (Interviewee E). It was, however, manifest in small quantities in the area referred to in Burnaby’s OCP as the Central
Administrative Suburban Office Centre. This episode further confirms the precept of network instability (in the sense of unstable attachment to presumably agreed goals); and it suggests a need for MGM planners to consider what strategies could help shore up network instability or, at the very least, to recognize it and adapt accordingly when it happens.
Chapter 8 – The Big Bend Area

This chapter describes the evolution of the Big Bend Area in its capacity as a major employment node. Section 8.1 below gives a brief overview of its pre-1976 history. Then Section 8.2 focuses in greater detail on specific themes during the critical development period for the area, from 1976 through 1996, followed by Section 8.3 which outlines results and trends from 1996 to 2006. Finally, Section 8.4 concludes the chapter with critical findings from the Big Bend Area development for the relationship between communicative regionalism and MGM outcomes.

The Big Bend Area is the southernmost of the three employment nodes analysed in this case study (refer back to Figure 1.1 in Chapter 1), located along Burnaby’s southern perimeter and the northern shore of the Fraser River. As noted in Chapter 1, today the area provides approximately 9,500 jobs (Metro Vancouver, 2009a) and is expected to accommodate roughly 18,000 once all developable land is built upon (Interviewee F, 2008). The latter figure is roughly equivalent to Metrotown’s 2002 employment total and roughly double the initial target of 7,000 to 10,000 jobs for each RTC set in the 1970s in the LRP.

Big Bend is bordered to the west by Vancouver and to the east by New Westminster. Its main points of access consist of Boundary Road and Marine Way, which are both classified as primary arterial roads; and to reach Big Bend today one must go by car. An exception to

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219 The latter has been a significant factor in regional and local settlement and development patterns. It is 1,375 km long, extending from the Pacific Ocean through more mountainous territory, and known for its diverse range of ecosystems and fertile salmon habitat. As will be discussed later, more recent developments in Big Bend have acknowledged the river’s ecological significance.
this exists for the employees of one of its newer business parks who benefit from peak hour transit service between the area and two ALRT stations – the Metrotown Station in Burnaby, and the 22nd Avenue Station in New Westminster.

If Metrotown exemplifies the suburb trying to grow into a city, Big Bend is the rural backwater which has alternately been gently coaxed or dragged kicking and screaming into urbanization. Driving through one of its newer business parks, known as Glenlyon, you will see a large campus-style district, with tranquil grass boulevards and beautifully meandering (but empty) sidewalks. You will also encounter evidence of a strong environmental influence at work, with riparian habitat enhancement areas in a local park. And you will pass the headquarters of several large technology and retail companies, including Ballard Power Systems (a pioneer in fuel cell technology); offices for Future Shop (an electronics retailing firm); and Mitroflow (a medical technology subsidiary of the Sorin Group).
But elsewhere in Big Bend you will see a greater diversity of uses. If you drive back up to Marine Way past the new golf course (See Figure 8.2 below for generalized map) and head east, you will see market gardens and a major plant nursery on the north side of the road; signs for the New Haven Business Park (subdivided but not yet built as of 2008); and several “mega-churches”, i.e., region-serving (vs. neighbourhood) places of worship. On the south side of Marine Way you will see what is essentially a large strip mall or power centre. Head south and backtrack again into the heart of Big Bend and you will see a hodgepodge of actively farmed land, and larger scale, less attractively-maintained industrial premises compared to the sanitized business parks growing to the north and the west.
Figure 8.2 Generalized Map of the Big Bend Area Today

Source: Created by Anders Wong on behalf of the author.
Chapter 8

8.1 Overview of Big Bend’s Pre-1976 Land Use and Planning History

At the beginning of the 20th Century, this part of Burnaby was mainly covered by larger farming holdings as well as logging operations and logging camps to house forestry workers. Like Metrotown, it benefited from railway services, initially established in 1907 by the BC Electric Railway as an alternate streetcar route between Vancouver and New Westminster for the region’s residents. The line included two stops in the area; and the railway continued to operate as a passenger service until 1956, when it became exclusively used to transport freight. In 1925, what was then considered the world’s largest shingle mill had been established at the area’s south western edge, although the rest of the area remained largely

Source: Photos by author, 2007
undeveloped (Burnaby, 2007b; see also Figure 8.4 below). There was even the occasional squatter’s shack along the foreshore (see Figure 8.5)

*Figure 8.4 Photo of the Watson Cedar Mill, 1950*

![Image of the Watson Cedar Mill, 1950](image)

*Source: Courtesy of the Burnaby City Archives*
As noted earlier in Chapter Five, after the second World War Burnaby as a whole had begun to experience rapid residential and commercial growth; but except for the mill, some scattered new industrial uses, and a large peat mine in the centre of the area, Big Bend was still considered largely undeveloped as of 1955 (Burnaby, 2008a). Very little on-the-ground change occurred in this area relative to other parts of Burnaby and Greater Vancouver in the immediate post-war period, but there was no shortage of ideas for its future. The 1952 Lower Mainland Regional Planning Board Report The Lower Mainland Looks Ahead spoke to the area’s anticipated significance as a source of regional employment, in the context of an overall industrial decentralization program intended to produce “a constellation of smaller

Figure 8.5 Photo of Squatter’s Shack at the Foot of Byrne Road, 1930

Source: Courtesy of the Burnaby City Archives
communities of a size in which a man can live and fully and retain his individuality” (LMRPB, 1952, p. 40).

At that time the Big Bend area was already designated as a locus of future industry, with compatible municipal zoning in place (ibid., p. 41). Both the regional plan and municipal zoning likely responded to the site’s extremely flat topography, owing to its location on an alluvial plain, and to its regional centrality. The 1952 regional plan also acknowledged the role of the Province in flagging appropriate future industrial areas, whose Department of Trade and Industry had conducted a survey to identify desirable future industrial sites outside the CBD (ibid., p. 42). The regional plan further noted that the Municipality of Burnaby owned a total of 1,975 acres (799 hectares) of vacant industrial land. Not all of it was in Big Bend, but the latter represented a significant portion of Burnaby’s industrial holdings (ibid., p. 42).

By the time the Lower Mainland Regional Planning Board’s Chance and Challenge concept plan was produced in 1963, there was a clearer sense of how industrial areas like Big Bend should relate to the region’s overall nodal concept. The reader will recall that the Trans Canada Highway had not yet been completed in 1963; and both the anticipation of, and political momentum behind, the highway project would have had a significant influence on plans at the time. As discussed in previous chapters, the plan saw each node as connected to the others through a freeway network which would also link up with industrial areas and airports (LMRPB, 1963, p. 7). This implied that the RTC nodes were kept separate from industrial areas, but that both types of employment concentration were important in MGM.
The 1963 regional concept explicitly flagged industrial areas as the first front of its decentralization campaign, to help reduce commuting distances for residents and provide an industrial tax base for each local government (ibid., p. 9). In some respects, this desire to bring industry to the suburbs in order to benefit MGM predated the GVRD goal of office decentralization, likely owing to the resource-focused natures of the Provincial and regional economies at the time, and a clear belief that industry and offices would forever remain distinct from each other, as will be described later in this chapter. This earlier vision for industrial areas may help provide at least a partial explanation of why the Big Bend Area has been able to emerge as a strong employment competitor to Metrotown.

In 1966 the decentralization vision was expressed in more tangible and formal terms, with the adoption of the Official Regional Plan. The nodal concept was referred to with the term “Regional Towns”; and industrial areas were expected to “be located in relation to the Regional Towns for the convenience and economy of residents” (LMRPB, 1966 p. 9). The plan placed special emphasis on maintaining an appropriate base of industrial land, which was declared even then to be in short supply in the region as a whole (LMRPB, 1952; 1962, 1966). Official maps contained in the plan indicate that the entire portion of Big Bend south of the railway line was designated for industrial uses in 1966. A significant portion of land north of the railway was also designated industrial, although most of the land directly fronting Marine Drive\textsuperscript{220} was designated as rural, except for two parcels designated as RSV, at least one of which was the New Haven Youth Detention Centre (LMRPB, 1966, p. 8 of

\textsuperscript{220} A road which predated and today runs parallel to the major arterial road known today as Marine Way.
Schedule B). The industrial designation was used specifically to refer to conventional industry including distribution, warehousing and manufacturing activities, according to Interviewee G (2009).

As the reader will recall from Chapter Four, the LMRPB was eventually dismantled and replaced with the geographically smaller GVRD in 1969. But the general ideas promoted in the Official Regional Plan remained in place and were being acted upon by the municipalities. By the 1970s Burnaby had major plans for Big Bend, starting with a new area zoning concept approved in 1971, and a more detailed concept plan in 1972. According to a former Burnaby staff member who had worked on it, the 1972 plan was specifically intended to address some locally problematic land uses (not unlike the shack shown earlier in Figure 7.6):

Prior to that, [the area] was zoned M3A, which was a permissive heavy industrial zoning category, allowing a broad scope in the forms and types of industrial uses, and other low end uses were emerging that did not contribute to the improvement of the area or add to the overall employment and tax return objective of the City. To address these concerns, the City prepared a new conceptual plan for the 2,000 acre Big Bend Area, organizing it around three major land use components: industrial, open space and agricultural (Interviewee F, 2008).

At that time, the plan envisioned largely industrial uses to the south of the railway, including a large portion of agricultural holdings designated as a long range industrial reserve. There was also an explicit goal of promoting part of the area as an industrial park controlled by a small group of developers, and of phasing development “to reduce the undesirable scattering of industry… and provide the impetus for a more rational pattern of occupancy” (Parr, 1972, p. 8). The latter goal spoke in part to the City’s significant land holdings in the area. At the
same time, however, plans were made for a public golf course nearby, a sports centre, and a continuous foreshore trail. Such amenities would have been in keeping with Burnaby’s desire to retain a livable image.

To facilitate its goal of rational, controlled business park development, Burnaby included land use designations entitled “CD” or comprehensive development on its 1972 concept map, indicating that a negotiated program of uses, servicing, and design parameters was expected from future developments in Big Bend (Parr, 1988, p. 3). Even with this primarily industrial vision, there was recognition that simplistic industrial zoning designations would not achieve the character and mix of employment uses desired by the municipality. For that reason, the 1972 plan provided for what it termed a comprehensive industrial district as a smaller sub-unit within Big Bend.

When the comprehensive industrial district was initially envisioned, the standard tool used by other municipalities in the province for achieving this type of comprehensive development at that time consisted of creating ad hoc land use contracts221 between the municipality and property owners. But Burnaby soon pioneered use of a new tool known as the comprehensive development (CD) zone, which it used to control development for building sites within the comprehensive industrial district designated in the plan. Burnaby’s CD zones functioned then (and still do today) as a type of “spot zoning” to be developed and

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221 Land use contracts were eventually phased out when development permit legislation was introduced in the 1980s.
applied on a site-specific basis—usually through an extensive negotiation process between municipal staff and development proponents\(^{222}\).

One former Burnaby staff member explains how the CD zoning tool evolved in Burnaby and how it worked:

*The notion was twofold. One was to provide for mixed use developments which were not easily accommodated within a traditional zoning bylaw structure. The CD allowed us to incorporate the actual mix and form of uses within the proposed development: the CD zoning document became the actual bylaw that was approved. As a result there was clarity about the specific uses permitted along with the project’s form and density provisions. The other aspect of the CD approach is that it gave the developer and Council discretion for relaxations from the basic siting standards of the more traditional zones. Generally, the adjustments were common sense…. Under the CD [tool] the City was able to make a better project through negotiations with the developer as part of the project. It’s actually been an extremely useful tool. Some people—and the ones that actually use it a lot, the developers, and who understand it, really like it. Others have—when they first get involved they have a little concern, maybe, that the certainty’s not there (Interviewee F, 2008).*

The same interviewee provides further detail on how the tool was used in the Big Bend context, where the lands designated for CD were under the control of a major land owner—a federal crown corporation\(^{223}\) known as the Canadian National Railway (the CNR), and eventually Canada Lands Corporation. Certain aspects of Burnaby’s relationship with this owner will be discussed further under a later section of this chapter, including some land

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\(^{222}\) Abuses of this spot zoning potential are prevented through separate provincial programs encouraging, but not requiring, municipalities to have broader land use plans to guide future development. The latter helps promote use of the CD tool in ways which reflect broader community goals, rather than simply for developer expediency. Burnaby’s reference to its CD zoning designations within its OCP is an example of good practice in this regard.

\(^{223}\) The reader will recall from Chapter 5 that a crown corporation is a unique type of government agency which, depending on the form it takes, may be subject to less political control than a government ministry.
exchanges. But in terms of CD zoning, the land exchange facilitated a high degree of control for Burnaby, as indicated by Interviewee F:

As a condition of the land exchange with the City, the lands were zoned to CD with the zoning describing the principles under which the property would be developed. As such, it removed the existing M3a zoning and presented the desired development characteristics, road standards and other infrastructure needs. The City then worked with the Canada Lands on preparing a detailed document specifying the development standards and criteria on a site by site basis. This document which was eventually approved by Council became the basis for subsequent CD zoning amendments for each development site. From the developer’s perspective, it gave them the needed certainty and helped facilitate the CD zoning amendment process.

Many BC municipalities now use the CD zoning tool as a means of implementing broader land use directions (and use it extensively). Yet Burnaby has been somewhat unique among Greater Vancouver suburbs in the degree to which it specifies the use of CD zones in its broader land use plans, and the extent of overall use. This tendency is of interest given another scholarly observation that development negotiations provide an important vehicle for planning staff themselves (rather than just politicians and developers) to exercise control over urban form (McGovern, 1998). One could thus surmise that Burnaby planners recognized this potential for control from an early stage in the development of the Big Bend Area, and chose to use land use designations referring to CD zones as a means of securing this control. Of course, while the negotiations occurred, Burnaby planners nonetheless sought to shape them in ways which would maximize the municipality’s benefit. During this shaping process planners would use what Giddens called authoritative resources (discussed in Chapter 3), which they would have possessed as insiders at City Hall. Such resources would have included their expert knowledge of municipal processes, including an ability to influence the

224 For example, other inner suburban municipalities like Richmond which make use of this tool, will specify “urban business park” or “mixed use-light industry”, while leaving open the possibility that standardized zoning categories might still be applicable (e.g. Richmond, 2009, pp. 64-65).
timing for advancing a development to a Council’s agenda and to even cause delays for uncooperative developers (see McGovern, 1988 for discussion of this type of power). The potential threat of a delay would indeed be significant, since developers are usually borrowing money to pay for their land. (Each month of delay can represent sizeable interest costs.) Planners’ authoritative resources thus could and did have direct allocative consequences. Moreover, planners’ authoritative resources in the shaping process would also include facilitating negotiations between developers and other departments and agencies.

One other telling aspect of Burnaby’s use of CD zoning was that it also occurred prior to explicit Provincial endorsement of the process through legislation. While the City of Vancouver in its own separate Charter might have enjoyed discretionary zoning powers, Burnaby’s CD use was relatively unique among its other regional counterparts then bound by the Municipal Act, which did not explicitly allow CD zones. Burnaby’s use of CDs in this manner implies an empowered, risk-taking approach to zoning through the municipality’s stealthy challenge of the apparent lack of permission for this activity.

Even more interesting was the Provincial government’s eventual permissive response to this approach. In part, this permissiveness likely sprang from the overall culture within British Columbia of an independent local ethos (Paget, 1997) and degree of provincial responsiveness. The Province eventually legally enshrined Burnaby’s use of CD zoning through provisions in the Local Government Act allowing local governments to attach maps and other supporting documents to specific zones. As indicated in the following excerpt from an interview with provincial staff, this was an indirect yet powerful formalization:
Interviewee B: When [former NDP Minister Robin] Blencoe came in [in 1992]... I worked on a package that would allow comprehensive development zoning, density bonussing, and housing agreements.

Interviewer: So with that, now some of that I don’t necessarily see in the legislation, but would that have been provided for in regulations?

Interviewee B: Oh, it’s very subtle. The density bonussing is obvious, and the housing agreement is obvious. And comprehensive development zoning is ambiguous, enabled by just a simple phrase.

Interviewer: What’s that? The reason I’m asking is because [another provincial colleague] was saying the other day ‘we don’t allow [comprehensive development zoning]’

Interviewee B: He hasn’t accepted it... and some municipalities don’t accept it. Obviously Burnaby does. I was a folk hero in Burnaby when I legalized everything that they had been doing after I [came to work for the provincial government] [laughter]. The City of Victoria uses it for sure. Saanich doesn’t, because their lawyer doesn’t believe it is possible. But basically there’s a phrase there pertaining to a bylaw that says “and may include maps, drawings, figures and other material”. And really --what this says is the bylaw can be more than just words. It can be a scheme. So the comprehensive development zones are basically a comprehensive plan for the development of the site. It comes with conditions –the zoning is discretionary. I can give it to you or not. I’ll give it to you if you do A, B and C. So --and it was basically—so look for that phrase, that’s all it was (2008).

The permissive approach by the Province may also have been aided by Burnaby’s authoritative resources, partly owing to its size and prominence within British Columbia’s largest metropolitan region, but also partly due to the unique relationships between Burnaby and Provincial staff. The latter were helped by the fact that the Provincial staff member quoted above, now occupying a senior position, had once been a planner with the City of Burnaby.

Interestingly, Burnaby’s legally murky position in initially using the CD tool may have helped it achieve positive outcomes: “Burnaby had good planners and creative lawyers—or
lawyers who were willing to test things. And the key was the fact that Burnaby knew they didn’t have explicit authority [to use the tool]. Because without the authority Burnaby had an incentive to be reasonable [in its dealings with developers, to avoid risking a legal challenge], right?” (Interviewee B, 2008).

Zoning innovations and municipal ambitions notwithstanding, market interest in, and development of, the area took longer to arrive than anticipated. In 1975 Burnaby developed an implementation report for the Big Bend Area; and hopes were raised by the prospect of a major steel and plate fabricating plant (owned by Dominion Bridge) relocating to Big Bend. At that time the municipality went so far as to exchange lands with the site owner to make the anticipated relocation a more desirable prospect; however, the move never materialized. It would take nearly a decade for development interest in the Big Bend Area to manifest in a serious way.

8.2 Evolution From 1976 to 1996

As discussed in the Metrotown context in Chapter Six, 1976 marked the beginning of concerted implementation efforts on the GVRD’s Livable Region Plan, which included an ambitious office decentralization program. One interesting connection between the Big Bend Area and Metrotown, also alluded to in Chapter Six, was the view by at least some municipal planners of Big Bend as a potential repository for some of the industrial uses the Municipality hoped to eradicate from Metrotown. This would facilitate the Metrotown vision while avoiding the loss of an existing tax base; and it was evident in the (Chapter 7)
example of staff encouraging relocation to Big Bend by the wholesaler that had occupied a portion of what is now the Metrotown Mall site. During early implementation of the LRP it was expected that local governments would continue to respect the regional goal of preserving and servicing industrial land. The 1980 Official Regional Plan continued to designate a large portion of the area for industrial purposes; however, in keeping with the assignment of some local agricultural lands to the ALR following the 1973 adoption of the Land Commission Act, and likely informed by the more detailed planning for Big Bend (begun in 1971), the Official Regional Plan also designated some of the Big Bend Area for agricultural and park uses. This suggests that dialogue between the GVRD and Burnaby on that issue had been positive; for at that time both the Official Regional Plan and Burnaby’s land use plans for Big Bend were mutually-reinforcing. Where industrial was designated in the Big Bend portion of the Official Regional Plan, Interviewee G underscores the intention of the designation to promote traditional industry, as opposed to its contemporary office park configuration.

From 1975 to the mid-1980s there was generally little activity in the Big Bend Area, in spite of the comprehensive industrial planning undertaken for the area in the early 1970s. But after that period, an important impetus to development came in the form of major transportation upgrades, as discussed below, in conjunction with economic restructuring.
Transportation Upgrades and the Start of Development

The most significant transportation infrastructure upgrades in the area were enabled by Provincial plans for a regionally-significant transportation linkage -- the Alex Fraser Bridge. While not directly accessing Burnaby, a large segment of traffic from Vancouver and Burnaby destined for the bridge would be routed along a new road which would be called Marine Way. Marine Way had been envisioned since 1972 as an alternate new east-west thoroughfare enabling higher traffic volumes than the existing east-west connection called Marine Drive. From the Burnaby Planning Department’s perspective, Marine Way’s advantage was its ability to reduce negative traffic impacts on existing residential areas. Provincial and municipal transportation experts came to see that, once established, Marine Way would provide traffic access from Burnaby to an existing bridge along the route (the Queensborough Bridge in the adjacent City of New Westminster), and subsequently to the new Alex Fraser Bridge, thus improving connections to destinations further south -- including the US border (see Figure 8.6 below).

The Alex Fraser Bridge, referred to in planning phases simply as the Annacis Crossing, had apparently been anticipated in various forms and locations by the Provincial ministry responsible for highway planning since the 1960s (Burnaby, 1974). The municipality understood that this provincial project was quite likely to go ahead -- well before a budget for its execution was proposed to the Provincial Treasury Board (ibid.). As a result, the Annacis

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225 Construction on this bridge began in 1983 and was completed in 1986; and from 1986 to 1991 it was the world’s longest cable-stayed bridge (Buckland & Taylor, 2009).
226 In reference to plans for the bridge to link both North and South shores of the Fraser River via Annacis Island, which sits in the middle of the river between the two shores.
crossing had some minor shaping influence on the alignment of Marine Way (*op cit.*), with the eastern edge of the arterial providing access to the first leg of the journey towards the new bridge. The Marine Way alignment is shown in more detail in *Figure 8.7*. Burnaby’s plans would have undoubtedly helped transportation planning staff at the Department of Highways because Burnaby’s implementation strategy for its Big Bend Area Plan included the acquisition of lands needed to eventually build Marine Way. The latter had been anticipated as early as 1972 (Parr, 1972, p. 2).
Figure 8.6 Map Showing Approximate Location of Improved Regional Connections via Alex Fraser Bridge

Source: Created by Anders Wong on author’s behalf.
Surmising from outcomes, there was likely some healthy dialogue between provincial and municipal actors at this time, largely at the staff level between Ministry of Transportation and Highways and Burnaby’s Engineering Department, and with occasional reminders of the power differentials between the respective agencies. Power differentials arose largely from both the Province’s:

- authoritative resources as a senior level of government with the capacity to mandate huge transportation-related projects (and strong political support for the projects in question); and
- its allocative resources in the financial means it possessed to bring about the Annacis crossing.

Burnaby would have been acutely aware of the futility of combating or contesting the Provincial decision to route bridge traffic through the municipality. It is also likely that Burnaby saw some direct benefit for the project for the majority of Burnaby businesses and taxpayers, by virtue of improved access to southern destinations in the region including the Canada-US border. Thus, its choices in that situation would have largely related to the specific alignment of such routing, and the degree of collaboration it would provide.
During the late 1970s and early 1980s under Bill Bennett’s administration, plans for the Annacis Crossing began to firm up. Planning discussions around transportation upgrades connected with the Alex Fraser Bridge provided important further insights into the relationships between Provincial and local agencies. One of the most telling documents in this regard was a 1980 report to Burnaby Council by the Burnaby Transportation Committee.
—a group comprised of three Burnaby Councillors\textsuperscript{227} and two community representatives\textsuperscript{228} (Burnaby Transportation Committee, 1980). The Burnaby Transportation Committee report provided clear evidence of the Province’s ability to modify municipal plans—not with legislation, but with money and the promise of better regional accessibility for Burnaby residents and businesses. The report spoke directly to the Province’s recent decision to launch and fund the Annacis Crossing—and of a corresponding need for Burnaby to adjust—but not scrap—it’s implementation scheme for the overall Municipal Transportation Plan completed and adopted by Council in November, 1979. According to the report:

*The road network configuration proposed by the Transportation Committee [in its 1979 plan] in South Burnaby [will be] adequate to cope with the projected increase in traffic flows [arising from the new crossing]. However, there may well have to be some alteration to time tabling of project implementation to accommodate the Annacis Project’s completion* (Burnaby, 1979, p.3).

Specific changes proposed in the report directly affecting the Big Bend Area included the following:

- Expediting plans to build the proposed Marine Way / 10\textsuperscript{th} Avenue connector, which would link two Provincial arterials and would be more cost-effective than an existing proposal to provide connector-level service along Byrne Road. (While these plans were to be expedited, the Burnaby Transportation Committee recommended asking the Province to pay for the new connector project);
- Indefinitely shelving Byrne Road upgrading plans; and
- Expediting construction of the proposed Griffiths Street / 19\textsuperscript{th} / 20\textsuperscript{th} Diversion for completion prior to 1983 and at an anticipated municipal cost of $500,000 (with an

\textsuperscript{227} W.A. Lewarne, G.D. Ast, and D.N. Brown, still referred to as *aldermen* at that time (Burnaby Transportation Committee, 1980).
\textsuperscript{228} G.W. Ramsell and R.W. Tarling (Burnaby Transportation Committee, 1980).
extra $500,000 promised by the Province in cost-sharing). (Burnaby Transportation Committee, 1980, pp. 4-6). The adjusted road network plan is shown in Figure 8.8 below.

\textit{Figure 8.8  The 1979 Transportation Plan for Big Bend Upgrades, as revised in 1980}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{map.png}
\caption{Figure 8.8 The 1979 Transportation Plan for Big Bend Upgrades, as revised in 1980}
\end{figure}

Beyond their mobility benefits, the provincially-funded bridge and related transportation investment were also rationalized as a major provincial highways construction package, aimed at boosting local employment during a major economic recession. In at least one parliamentary debate on the mater, MLA Alex Fraser (for whom the bridge would be named, upon his death) stated:
At the present time this program - the stepped-up highways and bridge program - has 8,000 people at work who wouldn’t be working if it hadn’t been for the stepped-up highway program. Where are those people from? Sixty-five hundred of those are from the private sector and are all good B.C. contractors at work - they’re not from anywhere else. Let the Leader of the Opposition say that we create contracts to bring [workers] in from Alberta or California. These are all B.C.-owned and -operated contractors who have got this work. What do we get out of the stepped-up highway program as citizens? We get a better highway system and a safer system, and we supply jobs to our citizens. I understand that with these 8,000 jobs, another 24,000 are created on a secondary level, such as in cement plants and steel fabricating and so on. (Hansard, 1983a).

Once completed, the bridge would provide the Big Bend Area and its prospective businesses with improved access to destinations further south, including the Canada-U.S. border. At a time when free trade with the U.S. was actively and vocally being contemplated at the federal level of government (and would eventually be signed in 1988\textsuperscript{229}), having such access would become increasingly important, both to facilitating the import of materials needed for production, or the export of any finished goods.

**Economic Restructuring and Change**

In addition to transportation upgrades, Big Bend Area development was kick-started by broader economic restructuring trends and their local manifestations. In 1985 the City of Vancouver began to develop neighbouring lands it owned near Big Bend on the west side of Boundary Road as the Fraserview Industrial Park. During this same year, two major landowners in the Big Bend Area—the Canadian National Railway (CNR)\textsuperscript{230} and MacMillan Bloedel—also began action to develop their properties. The latter development action was

\textsuperscript{229}This agreement would eventually be expanded to include Mexico, evolving into the North American Free Trade Agreement, or NAFTA (see Johnson, 1994 for further detail).

\textsuperscript{230}The Canadian National Railway was legally a federal crown corporation from 1919 until 1995. After 1995 it was privatized.
significant—not just because it represented evidence that the new bridge and related road construction had put the area on the map, but in terms of the broader picture of the Burnaby and British Columbia economies. As noted earlier in Chapter Four, from 1982 through 1986 the provincial economy went through a deep recession; and this recession was also linked to broader economic transition in the resource sector. MacMillan Bloedel was the province’s pre-eminent forestry company, with as many as 12,800 employees (including overseas operations) as recently as 1995 (Sawyer, 2008). With MacMillan Bloedel’s status as a major resource industry player, its decision in the mid-1980s to cease using its Burnaby lands for forestry related activities was major sign of this larger economic transition occurring in the province around that time. Local manifestations of restructuring have been described by many authors (e.g.: Soja, 2000). In the Vancouver context Hutton (2004) has done some important work in describing how this process unfolded in Vancouver’s inner city landscape, resulting in what he terms a re-territorialization and re-imaging of several previously industrial districts. Hutton’s work called particular attention to the role that planning values and public policy interventions have played in shaping much of this change.

In this climate of economic transition, it was not surprising that Burnaby responded to MacMillan Bloedel’s interests, providing a prime example of on-the-ground suburban economic restructuring. This response included revisions to the Big Bend Development Plan to allow for a land exchange involving these owners and the City, along with minor road reconfigurations to create a 260 acre consolidated business park site of benefit to Burnaby, MacMillan Bloedel, and the CNR (see Parr, 1985). While not communicative regionalism per se, this was an example of communicative planning (at least as far as landowners were
concerned), with actors involved in plan-related dialogue as well as participating in plan implementation for Big Bend. It is also an illustration of the notion that all action, even when it seems to have a more global character (such as the phenomenon of economic restructuring), has both a local origin (somewhere) and a local destination (Friedmann, 2002; Latour, 2007).

It would have been on the heels of this major resource sector transformation that Burnaby’s first OCP was developed. As noted in Chapter Five, the 1987 OCP contained explicit provisions for more intensive industrial development on properties within its borders, in order to prevent industrial sprawl to other parts of the region. The OCP also provided for a suburban business centre designation which would allow for limited commercial uses, including office and some retail. (The debate surrounding this policy decision will be discussed further in Section 8.3.)

**Senior and Local Government Land Development Interests in Big Bend**

Besides economic restructuring, it was to Burnaby’s advantage to promote development of the Big Bend Area as an industrial district to satisfy other important interests, which began to crystallize after 1985. As acknowledged in the initial Big Bend Area Plan, both the City of Burnaby and the CNR owned several large parcels in the vicinity. Both had agreed early on to collaborate on the eventual development and sale of those lands to the extent feasible, largely in areas of servicing and creating some comprehensive design and zoning parameters which would enhance the marketability of these parcels for light industrial uses. While the CNR (and later Canada Lands) represented the federal level of government, by virtue of the
Canadian constitution and the authority it provides to provinces to regulate municipalities\textsuperscript{231}, the CNR did not possess the same direct statutory link to municipal power as the Province would have enjoyed. It was also a crown corporation, rather than an actual ministry. In this context power differentials still would have existed; but they would have had a different character than those existing between the Province and the local government. According to two interviewees, and as will be elaborated later, relations between federal and municipal agencies were cordial (Interviewees E and F, 2008).

Here again, Burnaby would have had its own strong opportunity-based motives for collaborating. As observed by Lewis (1996), most North American local governments rely on business tax revenues to subsidize services that are largely enjoyed by residents. The pressure to make opportunities for business taxes would no doubt have been strong at this time (i.e., in the economic downturn of the early and mid 1980s). Moreover, Burnaby may have also felt some pressure to get ahead of other municipalities in the region hoping to achieve the same thing. A 1984 report\textsuperscript{232} analysing the status of regional industrial land indicated that many vacant industrial sites with longer term development potential were held throughout Greater Vancouver –not just in Burnaby-- by public sector corporations (Coriolis, 1984, p. 16). Hence, during this time, in light of the importance of business taxes to municipal revenues\textsuperscript{233} Burnaby may have felt under some pressure to develop its industrial inventory in advance of other municipalities in the region perceived to be more competitive.

For the same 1984 report also indicated that three other competing suburbs including the City

\textsuperscript{231} see Chapter 5.
\textsuperscript{232} Written by Coriolis Consulting Ltd., on behalf of the Greater Vancouver Regional District
\textsuperscript{233} Refer to Lewis, 1996, for a more detailed discussion of the role businesses generally play in subsidizing residential tax rates.
of Richmond (which enjoyed a similar degree of proximity to the metropolitan core as Burnaby) held the greatest amount of attractive and easily developable industrial lands, both in the immediate and longer terms (ibid., p. 13).

At the same time as federal and municipal interests in developing the area began to converge, provincial interests were growing. BC Hydro, the provincial electric utility provider (discussed in Chapters Four and Six) also owned a four acre site in the vicinity of Boundary Road and Marine Way, which it wanted to sell (Parr, 1985). In 1985, BC Hydro applied to the City of Burnaby to adjust land use designations on this site, seeking permission for a “service centre” (ibid.). The rationale for this designation was to meet the perceived convenience retail and lunchtime dining needs of industrial employees and clients of local industrial businesses. Burnaby planning staff supported this proposed change (ibid.) – likely influenced at least in part by the senior status or the authoritative resources of the applicant. Dialogue (and power relations implicit in that dialogue) would have been influenced by two different aspects of Provincial legislation, one granting local governments the ability to create OCPs and to zone lands as they saw fit, another in provisions in broader provincial legislation (The Implementation and Validation Act) which prevented local governments from making land use decisions that contravene the Province’s interests. That is, there would have been a subtle acknowledgement between both Burnaby and the provincial agency of the Province’s ability to intervene and impose a solution in the provincial interest in the event that the municipality made a zoning decision contravening the provincial interest.
Nonetheless, in reporting to Council on this matter, staff specifically cautioned that the proposed centre was aimed at local convenience. The centre was “not intended to compete with other more major commercial facilities that have been established within the context of the adopted commercial core hierarchy and developed to meet the needs of other ‘market’ areas” (Parr, 1985, p. 3). Staff also urged Council to restrict total service centre sites within the industrial area to maintain industrial character since “commercial land is often more lucrative than industrial land, it will be necessary to [prevent] the unwarranted pre-emption of industrial land for commercial development” (ibid., p.3.). Thus, rather than allowing the episode to completely destabilize its vision for the area, Burnaby sought to contain and control its impact, by making statements that it hoped would influence other private sector sites that would not have been of significance to BC Hydro.

In any event, given the improved market interest in the area, the City of Burnaby geared up to make the lands developable. Actions in this regard included:

- Developing a strategic land filling policy\(^\text{234}\) to expedite the logistical aspects of business park and road construction at a time when needed materials were in short supply (Parr, 1988b);
- Preventing any new uses of an undesirable nature (which might detract from the desired business park image) from locating in the area. This was aided through a text amendment to a specific industrial zoning designation (Parr, 1988c and 1988d);

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\(^{234}\) The soils in the Big Bend Area included a substantial amount of peat, which is inherently unstable. In order for development to occur on such soils, removal and replacement of them with sturdier soils is required, often in combination with a pre-loading process (Parr, 1988b).
• Committing City finances and construction resources to an industrial loop road (through what would later become the Glenlyon Business Park) by identifying it in the 1989-1993 Capital Budget Major Roads Programme (Parr, 1989a); and
• Acquiring a strategically-located, privately-owned parcel that would enable completion of this loop road (Parr, 1989a).

But not all aspects of market interest were constructive from the City’s perspective. BC Hydro owned a second (and significantly larger) site in the area, which it was having trouble selling. In large part these difficulties arose because the site comprised a big portion of farmland. The latter was protected by the Provincial Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR), described earlier in Chapter 5. The ALR was (and remains today) administered by a separate provincial agency, the Agricultural Land Commission (ALC). The ALC had established strict criteria and procedures surrounding any potential application to add non-farming uses to any ALR sites. Nonetheless, in mid-1988 an interested buyer took out an option to buy the site for residential purposes. The stakeholder was none other than the Triple Five City Development Corporation, which had made the 1984 failed attempt to build a competing mall to Metrotown (described in Chapter 7). Here again, Burnaby refused to be accommodating, as it clearly objected to residential on that site, because it conflicted with Burnaby’s overall vision for the area.

Notwithstanding the crown corporation’s senior government status, Burnaby Planning staff made it clear to BC Hydro and the potential buyer that the City opposed residential uses on
the site. Burnaby’s response could arguably be described as combative. Cognizant of the City’s limited power base in the dispute, staff (as in the Metrotown case) once again took a contrary report forward to Council. Not only did the report outline the planning perspective opposing the residential; its contents were also communicated to the ALC, effectively involving another agency as a potential ally (Parr, 1988a). This is a good example of Burnaby appreciating the limits to its own authoritative resources, and thus attempting to borrow those of another agency with a more powerful position to enhance its position in a dispute with another. Here again, the approach must have worked, because in January 1989 the property was eventually sold to another company (Burnaby Business Park Properties Ltd.) which sought to develop the site for business park uses (Parr, 1989b). Nonetheless, it would be more than a decade before a detailed plan (which also included extensive public consultation and the reconciliation of industrial needs with conflicting environmental and agricultural goals) would be jointly approved by Burnaby and the ALC for developing a larger portion of the site (Stenson, 1997 and 1998).
In terms of actual development, the western portion of the Big Bend Area developed first, beginning with parcels immediately next to the Vancouver boundary, and known today as the Marine Way / Boundary Business Park\(^{236}\) (See Figure 8.9 above). By the mid-1990s, development activity had begun to move further east to an area that would be known as Glenlyon Estates (shown earlier in Figure 8.2). The latter was where a substantial amount of lands were held at Glenlyon by CN Rail; and at the time the agency became privatized, its lands were sold to the Canada Lands Corporation\(^{237}\) to develop them on the federal

\(^{236}\) At one time this area had been referred to by staff as the DL 161 Industrial Area, named after its legal parcel description.

\(^{237}\) Canada Lands Corporation is also a crown corporation, thus not entirely removed from federal influence.
government’s behalf. As a fully controlled development area with clear design standards (as compared with many other industrial areas in the region which lacked these), proposals for subdividing and servicing the Glenlyon Business Park clearly met with Burnaby’s longstanding vision for the area. The importance of the area—and the relationship with Canada Lands staff—to Burnaby is underscored by its approach to the allocation of planning staff resources to facilitate the project. According to Interviewee E (2008):

*There was one planner whose job was Big Bend. And for many years it was Glenlyon and CN. And that’s all he did, the moment the application came through the front counter, to the point of building permit, he was the one person…. If there was a problem with engineering, he, the planner dealt with it. So [development interests in] Glenlyon only dealt with just one person. And I think it’s a really interesting way of doing planning. And it tells you how important the relationships are. And also the project for Burnaby—that essentially that someone on staff was the designated expert…. And that was the only place in Burnaby where they had that kind of [arrangement].*

According to a second Burnaby interviewee, this implementation planner was assigned from within staff, partly because of his personality and skills.

*He was a ‘doer’ and would assist developers navigate through the approvals process. In essence his job was to help facilitate and be an advocate for the “client”... Big Bend was such a large conversion from what it was—it became a full time job. To a large extent, the positive conversions in the area were greatly influenced by the efforts and diligence of the implementation planner (Interviewee F, 2008).*

The relationship between Burnaby and the Canada Lands Corporation was also influenced by key staff on the federal side—and by the unique arrangement which had enabled the federal agency to acquire most of the lands that would become the Glenlyon Business Park for free. According to Interviewee F:

*Canada Lands and the City had an excellent working relationship, perhaps partly because of a shared vision for the Glenlyon area. Canada Lands*
received their initial holdings in the area as part of a federal transfer... they didn’t actually have to purchase the land. At the time, research and high tech uses within a high quality business park environment were established as the base concept to set the business focus for the area and help achieve the desired employment intensity. They have demonstrated patience and the commitment to the development principles for the area, even during the down side of business cycles. Glenlyon has proven to be a positive asset for the redevelopment of the Big Bend area and the City of Burnaby as a whole. (2008 interview).

8.3 Developments from 1996 to 2006

By the mid 1990s development was proceeding steadily in the Big Bend Area. This was the period when high technology firms, such as Ballard Power Systems, began to build their facilities. Not only were these companies providing important tax dollars to Burnaby, they were also the source of good quality jobs capable of maintaining households—and keeping Burnaby residents from commuting to destinations further a field in the region.

If the Glenlyon Business Park and broader Big Bend Area had been maintained as traditional industry, the area would have clearly conformed to earlier regional visions for employment-generating uses. Yet the Big Bend Area as a whole, including Glenlyon, has evolved in part into a competitor to Metrotown for total office employment. Of course, the type of office “product” available in Metrotown was quite different from the low-rise campus style facilities constructed in Big Bend. Still, some of the jobs destined for the latter, particularly sales-related jobs associated with technology companies (e.g.: Regional head offices for electronics retailer The Future Shop) would have been compatible with Metrotown’s image and amenities. The question remains: with all the carefully orchestrated work that went into not just planning, but implementing the vision, for Metrotown, how did this transpire?
According to Interviewee E (2008), the shift in uses that occurred in the Big Bend Area from the 1990s onward was a gradual process that responded to rapidly changing market needs and perceptions. But this response was not orchestrated to simply capitulate to all market whims—it was intended to appreciate how technology was radically re-shaping economic and employment activities in previously unanticipated ways. The following excerpt from an interview with this individual illustrates:

Interviewee: I think when the Big Bend was going from the heavy industrial to “something different”—no one knew what that “something different” was. Because the first big ones in [to the Glenlyon portion of Big Bend] were Ballard [the hydrogen fuel cell manufacturer], Inex Pharmaceuticals. So they had an industrial function.

Interviewer: They were the kind of users that you would want to get there.

Interviewee: Absolutely. The buildings did not look like industrial, but they were doing research, but then shortly thereafter you had [offices for] Future Shop [an electronics retailing firm] coming in. You know? Future Shop—high tech—people get high tech mixed up. Well Ballard’s also high tech. But when you look at what happens in those buildings, [at Future Shop] it’s [someone on] the telephone taking your order. So somewhere along the line, that line blurred. For whatever reason, office became acceptable to move into there.

In a later portion of the same discussion, the interviewee adds:

At that time no one was clear what industrial meant. Especially for the LRSP and even today, what is industrial? And this time was the time that the whole definition of industrial was changing and I think the Ballard—Future Shop thing illustrates that, that in many people’s minds, they’re all industrial. And for many people, industrial means employment. Even now, at the TAC table when some people say industrial, some will say “You mean employment-generating uses.” So we’re still there... So in terms of heavy industrial, there was seen to be a role, and still is a role for that in Big Bend. But at the same time, you can think of industrial as a spectrum, so right from the office parks right down to the [public waste] incinerator [which was constructed in the mid-1980s]..
It is also worth interjecting at this point with a reminder of broader trends occurring during the 1990s in relation to high technology. In 1990, personal computer usage had increased significantly since the 1980s, but very few people had even heard of the internet, let alone used it. Then in 1991 CERN held a seminar on the World Wide Web, raising broader awareness of internet capabilities; and in 1992 the first graphical browser interface was created, making the internet potentially more accessible for non-technical users (History of Computing Project, 2009). Business interest in developing applications grew quickly during the early 1990s (see Peter, 2009). As internet usage became more widespread, new applications for users were called for, spurring the growth of high technology firms. By the late 1990s / early 2000s this growth in applications, coupled with concerns about computer functionality after December 31, 1999 (the so-called “millennium bug”), spurred what was known as a dot-com bubble, and a commensurate rise in the number of businesses involved in high technology activities (op cit). This is an example of external forces creating a certain degree of instability, in terms of planning expectations around which economic sectors showed the greatest potential for providing household-sustaining jobs.

Besides wanting to respond to market needs, Burnaby believed that intensifying overall employment would help it meet regional goals. For beyond the RTC concept, the 1995 LRSP had been accompanied by the development of population and employment targets for each municipality, intended to help fulfil the regional plan’s goal of furthering compact, complete communities. While these targets may not have had full legal effect, they initially carried strong political currency both at the regional board table and with the Councils of all member municipalities—particularly for those trying to lobby for new regional investments.
in rapid transit infrastructure in their municipalities. This was because the targets were explicitly understood by all as an important tool for furthering the four official LRSP goals.

The impact of the targets combined with the receipt of considerable provincial and regional investment in the form of a second Skytrain line, known as *The Millennium Line*. The transit corridor would travel in an east-west-direction through a more northerly section of Burnaby (see Figure 7.6 from Chapter 7), past many areas that were, at the time of design, being used for low density industrial activities. In order to reap the land use intensification potential offered by this second line, Burnaby was under pressure from several quarters to convert that industrial land. An interviewee explains what this meant for Burnaby’s remaining industrial areas:

> As part of the City’s commitment to effectively respond to the construction of the Millennium Line along the Lougheed Corridor and to maximize development opportunities adjacent to station areas and meet residential growth targets for Burnaby established by the GVRD, the City undertook an OCP review in 1998. As part of that review, about 250 acres (primarily low intensity use lands) were removed from our industrial inventory, along the Lougheed Corridor to accommodate new residential growth [in order to capitalize on opportunities presented by the new Skytrain line decision]. At the same time, a new plan for the Lake City industrial area was prepared that proposed an intensification of uses, form and employment to help offset the loss of the industrial land conversion. The City successfully negotiated for a second Skytrain station within the Lake City area to help accommodate the higher density industrial and business uses being proposed within the station environs. This trade-off and balancing for the best mix of employment and residential development opportunities strategically located within the rapid transit corridor was part of the City’s efforts for establishing a complete community. (Interviewee F, 2008).

Given this loss of employment capacity, Burnaby then perceived a need to find other ways of making up for it. Burnaby staff and Council saw increasing development intensities in other
industrial areas was seen as an important response, particularly when other suburbs located much further away from than Burnaby from the metropolitan core (e.g. the City of Langley, Langley Township, and Surrey) had already begun permitting higher densities, alongside with greater flexibility for uses. And in order to compete, particularly given Burnaby’s higher land values relative to those in outer suburbs, Burnaby clearly accepted the market’s need for greater flexibility:

*We came to the recognition that the traditional blue collar-white collar scenario* [initially implied in the Town Centre – industrial area role distinctions] *no longer met the needs of the market place*. *What businesses requested was greater flexibility in blending research, manufacturing, storage, and office space*. *Our typical zoning categories didn’t provide that latitude*. *In addition to the CD zoning approach, the City established two new zones in the Lake City area (the Business District 1 and Business District 2 zoning categories) to explicitly provide for this mixing of uses within more intensive forms of development.* (Interviewee F, 2008).

Despite this rationale, Burnaby’s accommodation of these new hybrid activities was eventually the object of criticism by an influential new hire by the GVRD in 2000 to the position of Regional Development Division Manager -- a planner by the name of Christina DeMarco. DeMarco today is a well-respected professional who had spent her career prior to working for the GVRD as a policy planner for the City of Vancouver, and as a regional planner in Australia doing metropolitan plans for Sydney, Canberra and Perth. DeMarco has also been quoted in several newspapers and journals critiquing the trend of office development in industrial areas, blaming this pattern for the region’s impending industrial land shortage. The following excerpt from an investment magazine provides one illustration:

*DeMarco says unexpected demand for industrial uses and municipalities who are thinking locally instead of regionally have contributed to the decline in supply.*
'There was a lot of thought that the economy was changing, and we wouldn’t be doing as much manufacturing and distribution in this region,’ says DeMarco. ‘But that’s not the case—there’s continued growth in those sectors. Another reason is that municipalities are using the land for other purposes than industrial. They’re using it for offices that could easily be located in the (Vancouver) downtown or (suburban) town centres. They’re using it for retailing and even recreational uses like hockey rinks, so it’s depleting the supply of industrial land.’” (Stewart, 2006).

Such criticism apparently came as a shock for Burnaby, which had consulted extensively with the GVRD when developing the Burnaby OCP framework that would eventually allow office uses in business parks. According to Interviewee F:

The City’s 1987 adopted Official Community Plan included clear references to Suburban Business Parks and Comprehensive Industrial Estates with linkages to their locations in the City. In the City’s major update of its OCP in 1996, the City’s policy intentions and rationale for its series of Business Centres were specifically itemized within the Regional Context Statement submitted to the GVRD and subsequently approved by them.

Thus, for Burnaby staff, DeMarco’s more recent views may have come at the wrong time in the debate. At the same time, some Burnaby staff were concerned about an insufficient appreciation of suburban office market constraints at the regional level. The same interviewee cited also observed that:

The region’s recent critiques of office parks were an overly simplistic perspective of how the business world works, and what these people want. The City has always encouraged developers to consider Metrotown for office developments (and will continue to do so), but a major firm like Electronic Arts [the multimedia games manufacturer] had no desire to locate there. The same can be said for Nokia. These firms have specific needs that fall outside the opportunities available in a town centre setting. They are looking for a corporate identity in a high amenity campus setting where special required activities and security issues can be addressed.

For onlookers in this debate, timing was indeed an important question. If offices in industrial areas were a mistake, why was the matter not raised at an earlier point in regional plan
implementation? Interviewee D (formerly of the GVRD) expresses some sympathy for both positions. He observes that

There was also the incomplete understanding of the nature of these businesses and their requirements. Certainly Ballard [a company located in Big Bend which designs and develops hydrogen fuel cells] in my opinion needed the type of facility they got. It never would have gone in a Metrotown or a RTC.

The lack of regional planning power at the time and the delicate political timing surrounding the LRSP adaption and long-awaited provincial growth strategies legislation may have made it difficult for GVRD staff predating remarks to argue with Burnaby’s land use choices in one of its premier business park areas.

Of course, Burnaby was not the only organization aware that the lines between office and industrial areas were blurring. In 1993, the GVRD had hired Coriolis Consulting to conduct another238 study – this time to analyze regional office space office users and broader trends. Coriolis warned the GVRD clearly that business parks would become a major competitor for office uses that the regional hoped would go to RTCs (Coriolis, 1993, p. ii). To a large extent, this was the result of costs in RTCs being so much greater than in business parks, while representing no cost savings over space in the more prestigious Vancouver CBD (ibid.). This finding predated the 2003 RTC study (discussed earlier in Chapter 6) by a decade; and yet the direction for business parks and RTCs seemed to remain unchanged.

Yet if Burnaby’s perception was that its policy changes were gradual and uncontested, GVRD staff saw the issue differently:

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238 The reader will recall that Coriolis also wrote an industrial study for the GVRD in 1984.
Joe Stott... [a former GVRD planner] tried to tell people about the problems of office parks, and how you could not build compact regions and complete communities and transportation choice by building office parks (Interviewee G, 2009).

Later in the discussion, Interviewee G adds further corroboration that some GVRD staff expressed concern:

Interviewee G: In 1999 Greg Yeomans... had written a report on the I3 zone, which was an evil zone that the City of Vancouver had put in to pretend that it was high tech office...

Interviewer: So what grounds did he use for bringing that forward?

Interviewee G: Undermining employment in the centres.

Interviewer: And did he ask for a decision [from the GVRD Board] at that time?

Interviewee G: I can’t remember what the recommendation was, but certainly nothing came of it. [The City of Vancouver] did get that I3 zone [adopted]. And I guess Ann McAffee and Larry Beasley [former Associate Directors of Planning in Vancouver] would argue ‘well, it’s a very small area and near a transit station’. [Which is] actually still a contentious issue.

Meanwhile, within the Big Bend Area, another policy shift has occurred in the area, with the significant addition of new large format retail activities nearby (see Figure 7.11 for location). The idea for this land use change was first broached in 1999, when staff asked Burnaby Council to approve a public consultation and technical study process for developing guidelines for a specialized service commercial precinct in Big Bend (Stenson, 1999, n.p.). The rationale expressed for the proposed change highlighted:
• The Big Bend Area’s strategic importance for Burnaby’s future development opportunities;

• The need to provide support services for the employees of local business parks which had begun, and would continue, developing nearby; and

• Forewarning in the 1997 OCP that some big box retail could be introduced as part of refinements to the Big Bend Area Plan (op cit).

Yet in light of the area’s longstanding industrial identify, the conflict between this new major retail precinct and relevant MGM goals –even considering debates surrounding their clarity-- seems much greater than the allowance of office in Burnaby business parks, given the different traffic patterns and employment impacts associated with retail uses. My perception in this regard is informed by the City’s earlier refusal of the Triple Five Mega Mall proposal in 1984, and by the different traffic impacts created by retail uses, as compared with industrial and office uses.
The resulting plan was approved in 2001, subject to applicants consolidating several existing small parcels into larger ones, and meeting a set of design criteria. Newly permitted uses in the portion of Big Bend shown in Figure 7.10 above included: general retail, large scale specialized retail, auto-oriented retail, integrated service stations, suburban office, and

2= Primary mixed use commercial centre
3= Mixed large/medium scale retail and suburban office
4= Motor hotel/ancillary suburban office
5= Local commercial
6= Large scale retail

Source: Burnaby 2009d, numbered legend added by author to enhance legibility.
“compatible light industrial uses (Burnaby, 2009e, n.p.). Such uses would cover just under 102 acres of net developable land, or roughly equal to 175% of Metrotown’s mixed use primary core\textsuperscript{239}. They would also include 13.5 acres of land owned by the city (\textit{op cit}).

Finally, in an effort to reduce the area’s potentially automobile-dependent travel patterns, the plan provided for improved (more frequent and more direct) transit service between this precinct and two skytrain stations: Metrotown and 22\textsuperscript{nd} Avenue. It further included provisions requiring developers to provide bicycle parking and changing room facilities for employees commuting to the precinct via bicycle (\textit{ibid.}).

In 2004 Burnaby Council endorsed yet more change for Big Bend, albeit at a slightly smaller, but still significant, scale. At that time Council adopted the New Haven Land Use Plan, which provided for the conversion of a prior institutional site owned by the Province (the New Haven Youth Detention Centre) to a mix of residential uses\textsuperscript{240} and business centre uses\textsuperscript{241} (Burnaby, 2009d). Given that Burnaby had been home to both this facility and the Oakalla prison earlier in the 20\textsuperscript{th} c., the City may have greatly welcomed the redevelopment opportunities presented by the detention centre’s closure. New uses permitted on the business centre portion of the precinct included: office, specialized production and light industrial uses, as well as a maximum of up to 10,000 sqft. of neighbourhood commercial floor space (Burnaby, 2009d, p. 18).

\textsuperscript{239} Based on Metrotown’s primary mixed use core occupying 65 acres (Burnaby, 2002, p. 3).
\textsuperscript{240} Roughly 8.8 acres in size, net of riparian setbacks for fish habitat protection, required by senior government statute.
\textsuperscript{241} Roughly 30.7 acres in size, again net of riparian setbacks.
\textsuperscript{242} Defined as automated bank machines, copy services, convenience retail, coffee shops and restaurants (Burnaby, 2009d, p. 22).
8.4 Big Bend, Communicative Regionalism, and MGM Outcomes

The narrative in this chapter has described the development trajectory of the Big Bend Area as an employment node, including episodes of dialogue and negotiation between Burnaby and senior government agencies. These activities are summarized in Table 8.1 on the next page. While a similar chart summarizing actions in the Metrotown node showed shifts in direction across all agencies involved in implementation, the cart below shows less fluctuation in the Big Bend case overall. The exception in this node is the City of Burnaby, which adjusted its array of permitted uses in the Big Bend node, albeit with the goal of adapting to a significant and widespread economic change (responding to a type of global instability with both positive and negative facets). While this action has recently been contested by GVRD staff, in the absence of a legally-valid regional plan at the time when such changes were first enabled in Burnaby’s 1987 OCP, it would be difficult to accuse Burnaby of contravening the regional growth strategy.
So what can the Big Bend case tell us about communicative regionalism outcomes in Greater Vancouver? In one respect, Big Bend provided evidence of communicative regionalism in

*Table 8.1 Big Bend – Summary of Implementation Actions by Agency*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Vision for Industrial Decentralization</th>
<th>Industrial Market Study</th>
<th>Local Area Planning &amp; Zoning</th>
<th>Land Assembly, Ownership, and Related</th>
<th>Transportation Upgrades</th>
<th>Push Envelope with Comprehensive Development Zoning</th>
<th>Discouraging Incompatible Uses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Burnaby</td>
<td>■</td>
<td>■</td>
<td>■</td>
<td>■</td>
<td>■</td>
<td>■/ O&lt;sup&gt;4&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Greater Vancouver Regional District</td>
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<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
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<td>n/a</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provincial Government</td>
<td>■&lt;sup&gt;1&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>n/a</td>
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<td>■</td>
<td>■/ O&lt;sup&gt;2&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
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<tr>
<td>Federal Government</td>
<td>n/a</td>
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<td>■</td>
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<td>■&lt;sup&gt;3&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>n/a</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

■ = lead or shared lead in the action  
● = supporting role  
O = change in direction

1. This vision was initially instigated through provincial economic studies (1950s).  
2. The province did not contest Burnaby’s use of this tool; and eventually recognized it through refinements to legislation  
3. The federal government’s willingness as a landowner to participate in Burnaby’s unique approach to zoning provided further legitimacy in this regard.  
4. While Burnaby aggressively supported its vision for Big Bend, both the introduction of office uses and eventual introduction of retail would constitute a major shift.
process, albeit at a time when communicative regionalism had not necessarily taken hold in a major way in the GVRD. Burnaby’s initial planning efforts for the area in the early 1970s (prior to the 1976 LRP) were an example of stakeholder participation in MGM plan implementation (criterion #2 of communicative regionalism). The reader will recall from Chapter 4 that the 1966 Official Regional Plan had a policy of maintaining an appropriate base of industrial land in the region, and specifically designated the entire portion of the Big Bend Area south of the railway line (and much of the area to the north) for industrial purposes. This designation remained in the regional plan – and set the broad parameters for municipal land use planning activities in this area, until regional planning powers were taken away in 1983.

While it is not clear what influence Burnaby had on this initial designation in 1966, the designation was sufficiently broad as to allow a large scope for action by municipalities, developers and land owners. It seemed to suit the municipality’s purposes at the time, given the mix of existing uses and the configuration of the municipality’s land holdings; and the existence of this designation was helpful in that it provided direction as a kind of placeholder” until Burnaby had the resources and time to develop its own vision for the Big Bend Area, which happened in the early 1970s. The fact that Burnaby actively participated in implementing regional land use designations and goals relating to industry from the 1966 plan (and demonstration of criterion #2) would at least hint at some communicative elements in the GVRD’s plan even at that early stage.
Yet it is difficult to uphold the development of this node from start to finish as an example of communicative regionalism at work. To a significant extent, this is because relatively little additional regional-scale direction for industrial land (beyond what had been provided earlier in 1966) was provided from the 1970s onward. The goal of decentralizing industrial lands from the metropolitan core continued. Moreover, to the extent that there was harmony between GVRD plans and Burnaby’s plans for this area (and this harmony did continue through to the 1983 cancellation of regional planning powers) efforts in the Big Bend node appeared to reinforce whatever degree of communicative regionalism had existed in the regional plan itself. Still, the relative inattention to industry in the 1976 LRP process (as compared with RTCs) – perhaps also owing, at least in the Big Bend case, to a relative lack of activity on those lands— hints that there may be a type of blindness towards industrial and employment uses in communicative processes.

Such blindness may arise in situations where industrial lands are located away from residential areas, and away from the public eye and, in the specific context of the GVRD, this blindness was arguably part of the regional culture. According to a consultant hired to do a report on industrial issues connected with the 1976 LRP:

“A general municipal attitude that prevails throughout the region is founded in the historical development of the region’s economy. The GVRD has had a limited association with heavy industry and manufacturing. The physical attractiveness of the environment and the appreciation of this inheritance limits the flexibility of unchecked industrial growth. There is a definite regional attitude against industries which downgrade the environment or the lifestyle of the inhabitants.” (Paulson, 1976, p. 58).
This raises a question for advocates of communicative regionalism and other approaches which build upon tenets. Essentially, how do you get stakeholders to discuss issues which may currently seem remote, unimportant or raise unpleasant associations, but which have significant potential over the longer term to impact other goals and values? This question is particularly salient when considered in the context of a communicative desire for information sharing on the one hand, coupled with organizational behaviour findings (cited earlier in Chapters 2 and 5) which indicate that any information perceived as threatening by decision-makers will cause the latter to centralize their decision-making processes and inhibit their intake of new information. While more research is needed to answer this question, as a first step in responding, the concerted use of additional tools or innovations to help better structure stakeholder dialogue might need to be explicitly provided for in communicative and / or post-communicative planning models. For the expectation that the planner will be capable of bringing forward perspectives which are ignored (or even knowing what all of those perspectives are) is problematic, as we have seen in Chapter Two. In terms of structuring tools, perhaps the consideration of corporate business planning tools such as the process of obliging planning participants to more overtly consider strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to various schemes and strategies being considered might help somewhat.

To be fair, the 1984 Industrial Study and the 1993 Office Study commissioned by the GVRD marked an attempt to overcome such blindness. Yet the GVRD at that time lacked concrete regional planning powers to motivate meaningful debate and discussion of any potential emerging conflicts between changing market conditions and regional goals. In short, both
the industrial topic, and the significant degree of instability in the MGM network itself, at a critical time in Big Bend development, made it difficult for either the GVRD or Burnaby to fully reconcile such evolving conflicts.

While there was little happening in terms of communicative regionalism, planning efforts for the Big Bend area at the municipal level did involve many examples of dialogue in the planning process; but arguably these also involved “something more” than communicative rationality. The design and construction of transportation upgrades in the area (linked with the Annacis Crossing) did demonstrate constructive dialogue between the Province and the municipality of Burnaby, and caused minor adjustments to the timing of Burnaby’s investments in its portion of the road network in Big Bend.

Yet such investments by Burnaby were not motivated solely by the Province engaging in meaningful dialogue. They were enticed through promises of cost-sharing, or the use of the Province’s allocative resources. The broader provincial project for the Annacis crossing also promised to be a source of employment (another form of allocative resources) for regional residents, including Burnaby citizens, at a time when jobs were highly valued. Of particular interest in the Annacis project is the contrasting provincial investment compared with one aspect of Metrotown. At the same time that provincial monies were being marshalled for the Annacis crossing project, the Province had been unwilling to spend money to help with the land acquisition strategy Burnaby and the GVRD had recommended for Metrotown. Expenditures for the Annacis project, and its Big Bend Area component, thus reinforce the point made in Chapter Six that participation in implementation of, and attachment to the
1976 LRP by an important stakeholder (the Province), was weak. In essence, the Province’s significant financial resources could and did shape implementation of the MGM—although not always with the same priorities envisioned in the LRP. This reinforces my earlier observation that the Province as one critical stakeholder in MGM plans had not only failed to fully “buy-in”, but it was clearly going to use its considerable resources to ensure the plans did not thwart the larger provincial interest.

As a related aside, the emphasis on the employment benefits associated with the larger Annacis crossing project was somewhat at odds with the Thatcherist/neoclassical meta-text used to refuse provincial participation in Metrotown land assembly. Instead, the emphasis on employment is almost Keynesian, harkening back to the earlier tradition of the Social Credit government under WAC Bennet (the father of the premier in power during the Annacis project).

Another example of something other than communicative rationality shaping outcomes in the Big Bend Area was evident in the relationship between Burnaby and the federal government in developing the Glenlyon lands. In this relationship, Burnaby’s role in the dialogue was enhanced simply by virtue of the municipality owning lands which could, if transferred to the federal government, facilitate the latter’s development of its own holdings in the area. In essence, Burnaby’s possession of allocative resources gave it leverage with the federal government in the negotiations which a non land-owning municipality might have lacked under similar circumstances. This leverage was manifest when Burnaby agreed to sell its lands to the federal government if the latter agreed to go through the CD zoning and
servicing process as if it were a regular (non-government) developer. Once the process was agreed to and launched, further more detailed negotiations ensued. The negotiations were again enhanced by Burnaby staff performing in “virtuoso social actor” roles, both in making the decision to appoint an ongoing liaison to help streamline (but not circumvent) the development approvals process for the Canada Lands Corporation, and through the skills of the appointed liaison officer himself. This suggests the value in more explicitly considering the role of power in its different facets along with the presence or absence of translation skills during deliberations linked to growth management implementation.

A final salient episode of “something more” in Big Bend planning happened when the Triple Five Development Corporation took out an option to buy a second BC Hydro-owned site. It hoped to convert the latter from an industrial land use designation and zoning to residential. The contrary staff report, as well as efforts to enlist the provincial ALC in the battle, were clear evidence of Burnaby’s refusal to capitulate to the interests of a specific provincial agency. Burnaby’s stance likely led to success largely because Burnaby possessed significant authoritative resources relevant to the issue. First, by demonstrating that the interests of one provincial agency (BC Hydro, selling its land to the highest bidder) were working at cross purposes with the interests of another (the ALC, whose mandate is to preserve agricultural lands), Burnaby could diffuse the authoritative power that BC Hydro had possessed, unlike in the other example where it sought a land use designation change for the property it owned near Boundary and Marine Way. Second, Burnaby’s provincially elected representatives, i.e., MLAs, tended to be quite sympathetic to the wishes of its local government. The MLAs would have likely been in a position to have additional influence on
provincial responses, as in the Triple Five proposal discussed in connection with the Metrotown node. As Interviewee D (2008) notes: “Burnaby politicians really, really respect their local council. If their council really has a problem, the Burnaby provincial politicians usually side with council”.

To sum up, the Big Bend Area has long been on Burnaby’s planning horizon as an important destination for industrial jobs. This goal was clearly compatible with regional planning goals during the 1960s and 1970s. However, Burnaby claims that MGM strategies of the 1980s and beyond (where they could be said to exist) have not really addressed this area sufficiently in terms of its role in the RTC concept. As a result, the City of Burnaby has responded with its own strategies for bringing the area in line with the market demands of the 21st century. According to a Burnaby interviewee (F), these strategies were not openly contested by the GVRD during the 1980s or 1990s; but according to a GVRD interviewee (G) such criticism was made, at least at the staff level, during this time. Regardless, by the early 2000s criticisms were clearly apparent, and publicized in the media, much to Burnaby’s apparent shock. A “blindness” to industrial issues which had begun during the critical 1976 LRP development (with its exhaustive public process) may have been a factor exacerbating the incompatibility between Big Bend development after 1987 and the RTC concept as expressed through to 1996. Such blindness would have been compounded by significant and very real shifts in market demands for lands in industrial precincts, including a much broader trend for office and quasi-office uses to locate in attractively designed and landscaped business parks. Fortunately, while not yet adopted as of July 2009, the long-awaited LRSP update may yet
provide for clear and agreed direction on the relationship between RTCs and other employment nodes.

Where dialogue and deliberation did occur in the development of Big Bend (and it occurred frequently) it was clearly influenced by the different abilities of relevant stakeholders to channel power through resources and even other actors in ways which would enable the realization of their own agency goals and mandates. Such channelling involved either allocative or authoritative resources (or some combination thereof). From the 1980s until the adoption of provincial growth strategy legislation in 1995, the GVRD lacked the authoritative resources to participate in such dialogue, and was essentially absent from these discussions up to and including the development of the 1996 LRSP.

Overall, many of the crucial deliberations involved in Big Bend’s development did not involve the region in any meaningful way. As a result, after 1976 one could not uphold Big Bend Area development as an example of communicative regionalism at work. This finding suggests a need for communicative regionalism—and any other theories which build upon its tenets—to more explicitly consider:

1. The various ways in which power dynamics in growth management implementation processes shape outcomes in specific types of settings;
2. New ways of bringing forward difficult information with the potential to affect the feasibility of desired goals.
Chapter 9 – The Discovery Place Employment Node

Discovery Place is the third and final node in this case study. It is the northernmost of the three, easily accessed via Highway #1 (The Trans Canada Highway), and near BCIT, the post-secondary technical institute mentioned in Chapter Five. The main arterial serving this precinct is Willingdon Avenue, which eventually extends southward to connect to Metrotown via a five minute drive in low traffic conditions, but over a half an hour walk and separated by significant grade changes. The discussion of this node is shorter than that for the other two because many of the tools and approaches pioneered earlier were standard aspects of Burnaby’s planning repertoire by the time the area was actively being developed. Moreover, the regional vision is even less clear for Discovery Park than for Big Bend.

The core of Discovery Place is 80 acres (32.4 hectares) in size, more than five times the extent of Metrotown’s main office area (Sub-Area #14). The functional area of this node could potentially be considered much larger if one also included the business park / low density office corridor along Canada Way to the northeast in its borders. In some respects, Discovery Place resembles the Glenlyon precinct of the Big Bend Area, in its grassy lawns and meandering streets and sidewalks. Like Big Bend, its development has also coincided with, and enabled, the preservation and enhancement of an ecologically sensitive riparian corridor. Initially intended as a large-scale incubator for high technology businesses, the area today includes several mature technology companies including Electronic Arts (a multimedia and games producer); Kodak (formerly an independently-owned local firm named
Creo which manufactured imaging software and digital cameras, acquired by Kodak in 2005); Xenon Genetics; Clearnet; and the MDS-Metro Labs.

Unlike Metrotown, Discovery Place is a discrete enclave apart from the City. It has been modelled after a University Campus, whose occupants spend large parts of their days contemplating abstract concepts and higher ideals apart from the vicissitudes of commerce. It is quiet and peaceful; and at one facility in particular, clearly evident security provisions reinforce the distinction between those who belong and those who are outsiders. Directly west of the precinct is a large neighbourhood of single-detached homes and a hospital.

*Figure 9.1 Photo Collage, Discovery Place*

*Source: Author*
9.1 Overview of Discover Place’s Pre-1976 Land Use Planning History

At the beginning of the 20th c., this part of Burnaby was even less developed than either Metrotown or Big Bend. There were a few farms on the edge of the area, and the Phillips-Hoyt Sawmill, and log pond which was built in 1908 (Burnaby, 2007a). Tracks for the Vancouver, New Westminster and Yukon Railway had been laid on the northern edge of the area, and by 1911 the Burnaby Lake Tramline (see Figure 9.2 below) was also established (ibid.).

Figure 9.2 Photo of Tram on the Burnaby Lake Tramline

Source: Courtesy of the Burnaby City Archives

By the 1920s the area remained undeveloped with farms at it edges. By the 1950s when the Post-war boom occurred, the area directly west of what is today Discovery Place was
covered with grid-patterned subdivisions and home to the Burnaby General Hospital, built in 1952 (Burnaby, 2008a). But the actual Discovery Place precinct, and the portion on the east side of Willingdon Avenue that would become BCIT, remained undeveloped for much of that decade (See Figure 9.3 below), until 1954 when a youth detention centre was built at Willingdon and Canada Way, directly to the north of what is today Discovery Place (ibid.). Then in 1959 the Provincial government excavated the BCIT site to the east, and installed prefabricated buildings to open the British Columbia Vocational School.

*Figure 9.3 Aerial Photo of Site of Discovery Place, 1954*

*Source: Courtesy of Burnaby City Archives, scale unknown*
The decade of the 1960s saw important developments for the area. In 1961 plans were announced to build BCIT as a parallel institution on the same grounds as the British Columbia Vocational School. The BCIT project was completed and open to students in 1964. The Trans Canada Highway (along the old roadbed of the Burnaby Lake Tram Line) was completed\textsuperscript{243} in 1963, providing more rapid automobile connections throughout the region and linking up with what would be a national highway. During the 1970s, the Discovery Place site essentially remained vacant, but the BCIT campus to the east grew and flourished.

\textsuperscript{243} This completion date reflected the entire Lower Mainland portion of the highway system. The portion of the highway near Discovery Place, shown in Figure 7.3 was actually completed in the mid-1950s (Burnaby Archives, 2009).
Figure 9.4 Photo of “Freeway”, 1955, which would eventually be incorporated into the Trans Canada Highway. Overpass in the distance takes Willingdon Avenue over the highway. Discovery Place is to the left, but not shown in photo.

Source: Courtesy of Burnaby City Archives
9.2 1976 to 2006 and Beyond

Burnaby initially adopted a plan for Discovery Place at Willingdon (under its older title Discovery Park) in 1980 at the behest of the provincial government, which had hired a consultant in 1979 to develop the proposed land use concept. At this time the 1976 LRP would have been placed at the GVRD level. Corresponding land use designations in the ORP at that time would have been “urban” – an extremely broad designation that could have included a range of uses.

The Discovery Place initiative was positioned as a direct response to Provincial concerns with a struggling resource economy (Burnaby, 1980; also Interviewee C, 2008). Among other things, it was a manifestation of the Province’s attempts to translate global economic restructuring patterns into local settings, in ways that would benefit both the provincial and regional economies. More specifically, the goal was to create new activities focused on technology in order to replace the resource sector jobs and businesses, whose financial prospects seemed increasingly dire. And, to facilitate those activities, the Province was willing to invest in land development. It did so in 1979 by creating two separate agencies: the Discovery Foundation, and the Discovery Parks Trust. The Discovery Foundation would eventually be converted in 1991 from a provincial agency to a non-profit corporation. Today its mandate is to “utilize its real estate and assets for the benefit of the people of British Columbia, particularly BC's post-secondary institutions and BC Innovation Council” (Discovery Parks, 2009a, n.p.). The Discovery Parks Trust owns the foundation’s land assets, and works to add value to these assets by constructing, leasing, and selling buildings.
to be used for research purposes on that land, while reinvesting profits into various benefiting post-secondary institutions (ibid.).

Interviewee C, a senior provincial staff member, elaborates on the provincial expectations at the time that the Discovery Parks Foundation and Trust were created:

_The government had high, high hopes for Discovery Parks... It didn’t happen to the level they were hoping. You have to put this into that period. They were all about trying to see the economy grow... and very experimental in terms of how they could combine tools for economic development. And one of those was Discovery Parks. It was this whole idea of incubators. They really got into this idea that— the R & D developmental process— if you could link universities and technical institutes to research, to entrepreneurs, you would begin to see this incubation stuff happening— Discovery Parks were all about that. And at the time it seemed like a very different kind of idea. Because [the Province] had to put a fair bit of finance— a fair bit of up front money into it and a fair number of tax credit, tax exemption issues that had to be dealt with, and there was a lot of debate about how deeply government was going to get into supporting these things. But if you look at now, something like the Vancouver Island Technology Park, it’s very much that model in terms of a lot of business activity coming out of university-spawned research. That’s what these were all about. And then, you know I said tax credits— the government was very interested in how it could use R & D to sort of reshape the BC economy. And this— at the time it was novel, and to some extent, off beat, risky. But— as with any R & D thing there have been lots of misses. But there’ve also been lots of hits, in terms of— you can see how much, how important technology research has become to the BC economy, how important all of these little research firms are in terms of employment, both in Greater Victoria and Greater Vancouver. In the 80s this was a resource-based economy, not much of this stuff existed. This was very, very novel, and very path-breaking._

Provincial government involvement in Discovery Place (through the Discovery parks Foundation and Trust) appears to confirm geographer David Harvey’s (1989) argument that entrepreneurial government investments in urban facilities have been increasingly used to help work out place-specific details to enhance capital accumulation. Such investments have also been used to explicitly enable larger scale economic changes. In this case, the changes
were from more resource-based activities to knowledge-intensive ones. In fact, the explicit goals for Discovery Park have been both to provide for an ongoing source of good quality jobs and tax infusions into the provincial economy.

From past documents and interviews, Burnaby appears to have strongly supported the provincial vision for the area, along with its rationale for this vision. According to Interviewee F (2008), the planning process between the Province, the Province’s consultant (hired to do much of the planning work) and Burnaby worked well; and Burnaby was thus supportive of the venture. This perspective is also manifest in the 1980 plan for both the Willingdon and the Simon Fraser University Discovery Parks sites, where the specific link to provincial economic goals was clear:

*Discovery Parks Incorporated has been created in order to implement the objective of increasing the productivity of British Columbia Industry, to enable it to compete effectively in the international market and to maintain a broad and strong economic base in the province. The role of Discovery Place is to attract capital-intensive, high technology industry and investment to the Province by developing campus style research parks adjacent to the educational institutions* (Burnaby, 1980, p. 5).

The overall land use aspirations for the area involved attracting research and development activities which might provide forward or backward economic linkages to existing firms in the city. On a more experimental basis, the vision also sought to “Provide high quality development which would serve as a model for other similar scaled developments and which would further strengthen Burnaby’s tax base” (*ibid.*, p. 5). This language underscores the economic importance of the precinct to the municipality, particularly in light of the need for
business property taxes to help subsidize residential services in most North American jurisdictions (see Lewis, 1996 for further discussion of this issue).

Discovery Place was also singled out for specific mention as a priority development area for Burnaby in its 1987 OCP; moreover, the plan also reiterated, in its own terms, the Province’s rationale, which focused on a need to adapt to, and anticipate, global economic restructuring. To this end, the 1987 OCP stated:

> Government and the private sector are deeply concerned about the need to effectively compete in an increasingly aggressive and technologically rich economy in order to help provide meaningful employment and a high standard of living for the community. Locally, this concern has been heightened by a number of macro-economic trends that have affected the regional economic environment. These trends... include slowed economic growth, higher rates of unemployment, and structural shifts towards a more service-based economy (Burnaby, 1987, p. 31).

As noted in Chapter 8, several years after the Discovery Place plan had been established, the GVRD hired a planning consultant specializing in land market analysis to conduct an industrial study (Coriolis, 1984). The study made no specific mention of Discovery Place, reconfirming the point made earlier in Chapter 8 that a type of blindness to industrial issues had existed in the GVRD. At the same time, given the 1983 provincial removal of regional planning powers, there would have been little incentive for the GVRD to attempt any involvement in Discovery Place, particularly in light of the Province’s ownership of those lands.

As with the Big Bend Area, the development of Discovery Place was slower than desired or anticipated. It took 16 years after the initial plan (i.e., until 1996) for six large complexes to
be built and occupied by medium to large research firms in discrete buildings. Also like the Big Bend case, the CD tool was also used to shape Discovery Place’s development, and was enshrined as a requirement in the 1980 area plan (p.13). In this instance, Burnaby continued its practice of using its authoritative resources to require that developers in Discovery Place negotiate land uses and design in ways that met local public interests. Again, given the power differentials between the provincial government (which owned the land being developed), and the municipal government, it is likely that Provincial agreement to such negotiations occurred because it was to the Province’s interests and political advantage to do so—and because Burnaby had been very supportive of the broader provincial interest during the overall process.

Also following the Big Bend approach, Burnaby sought to ensure some important public values were considered in the precinct’s development, notably environmental preservation and enhancement. To this end, four green nodes were identified in the Plan for Discovery Place – Willingdon, to be protected from development by the placement of appropriate covenants, and enhanced in terms of their habitat capabilities. Such covenants were negotiated through the rezoning process, rather than the plan itself (Burnaby, 1980); but the proposed green nodes and corresponding plan policy gave property developers advance notice that environmental protection would be a priority in future rezonings.

According to Interviewees E and F, the development (i.e., implementation) process for Discovery Place proceeded smoothly according to plan, where market interest warranted new construction. Yet this did not mean a complete lack of opposition. When the Electronic Arts
facility was initially proposed in the early 1990s, the development was contested by a local neighbourhood group, the Friends of Discovery Park (FDP). FDP opposed the development at that time because its members sought to preserve the site’s natural habitat (Lau, 2003). The City’s response to FDP initial concerns was to negotiate a covenant with Electronic Arts to preserve key habitat values (*op cit*). Eventually the solution seemed to be accepted by local residents, and relations between the FDP and the City appeared to be positive for a few years. For example, in minutes from a later public hearing for a 1998 rezoning to expand a different technology company’s facility within the Discovery Place precinct, all speakers gave their support for the proposed project, suggesting a reconciliation between the cities and residents. Two residents wrote in to express support, although requesting some minor adjustments and ongoing dialogue (Burnaby, 1998). One of those residents was Dennis Danielson, a member of the FDP. Only two residents made presentations (one of whom was the other letter-writer), and both presenters gave verbal support for the project (*ibid.*).

Things changed when the natural habitat covenant was eventually adjusted (along with the actual plan for Discovery Place) in response to the Electronic Arts proposal for an expansion. According to Interviewee F (2008), given the company’s existing site and building configuration the only option was to encroach on one of the protected natural areas, and find some means of compensating for the lost habitat. The proposal did not sit well with the FDP. At the public hearing connected with the rezoning, 13 residents made presentations opposing to the expansion –one of whom presented a petition containing 411 signatures. (Burnaby, 2004a). Conversely, only one resident indicated support; and four others with questions or

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244 At the time of the rezoning the company was named Creo – later acquired by Kodak.
concerns but no specific position (op cit). Letters of opposition were also written, including one from Danielson of the FDP claiming that Burnaby Mayor Derek Corrigan was unable to make a neutral decision on the matter (ibid.).

At the same time, however, two business interests made presentations in support of the proposal, namely the Vice-President of Research at BCIT and a representative of the Burnaby Board of Trade. Both argued that Electronic Arts represented an important economic sector for the City and the Province; and as such, its expansion should be supported (ibid.). Moreover, Burnaby staff and Council were concerned about the broader implications of refusing or overly delaying the project. Apparently this expansion proposal coincided with a critical decision faced by the company about whether to retain its operations in British Columbia or to leave and consolidate its operations in the U.S. “So this was not only [a decision affecting] Burnaby, it’s regional, it’s provincial. So—and they were talking about in the order of a $70 to $80 million dollar expansion. And adding another 2,500 to 3,000 people” (Interviewee F). After a delay of several months, which presumably helped resolve detailed technical matters and possibly (although this is not documented) enabled further consultation with residents, the rezoning application was thus given final adoption on August 9, 2004 (Burnaby, 2004b).

It may be that Electronic Arts sought to placate residents by making a significant donation for habitat restoration elsewhere in Burnaby. While documentation on this is not explicit, minutes from a 2005 Burnaby Council meeting show that Council endorsed spending $600,000 from the Electronic Arts Enhancement Project Fund on trail construction and forest
enhancement on another site, at Deer Lake Park (Burnaby, 2005). The existence of a fund containing the name of Electronic Arts suggests a bequest to the City from the latter.

Interestingly, the most recent events connected with the precinct relate to an adjacent site along Willingdon between BCIT and the northern portion of Discovery Place. At present the site of concern is owned by the Province and has been used for a variety of institutional purposes, including a short and long-term addiction treatment centre facility, provincial government offices, and a youth detention centre in the southwest portion of the site (now decommissioned); but in August 2008, the BC Ministry of Public Safety and the Solicitor General announced its plans to convert the facility into a pre-trial detention centre (also referred to as a “remand” centre). Although one might describe this announcement as an example of instability weakening attachment to a prior agreement (interpretive drift), it may not represent the same type of interpretive drift which occurred when Bill Bennett of the Social Credit Party assumed power from the NDP in the 1970s. To the extent that it does represent interpretive drift, it may be more subtle in nature. The announcement was also likely influenced by competing strategic priorities at the provincial level, combined with the relative difficulties of finding sites for new correctional facilities, as opposed to business parks aimed at high technology companies.

Regardless of the provincial motive, this announcement has upset the City, which claims that there was no hint about the proposed remand centre before the public announcement was made (Interviewee F, 2008; Lukson, 2009). In a recent report, the current Director of Planning and Building, Basil Lukson, indicated that a range of other uses would be preferable
to the proposed remand centre, including additional business park facilities; health and community service facilities, including centres for treating addictions and mental illnesses; and other educational uses (Lukson, 2009). Following recommendations made in Lukson’s report on this matter, in January 2009 Burnaby Council recently resolved to notify the Province of its disapproval of the decision, and to request reconsideration of the decision (Burnaby, 2009c).

In response to Burnaby’s request, the current Solicitor General, the Hon. John van Dongen wrote a letter to the editor of the local paper extolling the economic benefits of the proposed facility, and reminding the city of the significant annual increases the Province has been making to policing budgets (van Dongen, 2009). He also observed that the correction centre would provide between 200 and 250 construction jobs as well as 175 long term jobs; and it would be accompanied by provincial grants in-lieu of taxes to the City (ibid.). More recently, Burnaby City Council raised the political stakes on the issue, threatening to rezone the site to prohibit the proposed development (CBC Radio Vancouver, 2009). As noted earlier in Chapters 5 and 7, the Province technically possesses the constitutional authority to override the wishes of a local council in the broader provincial public interest; however, the political consequences of circumventing the local government (particularly given that the next provincial election was to be held in May 2009) would be extremely negative. In response, the Solicitor General announced in April 2009 that he would be willing to consider an alternative location for the remand centre if the mayors of all Metro Vancouver (formerly GVRD) member municipalities could come to a consensus on one by September 1, 2009.
(British Columbia, 2009e). It will be interesting to see what next steps occur in confirming the site’s future.

As of 2008, Discovery Place contains 15 buildings with over 500,000 sqft. of floorspace. A 16th building is currently under construction, comprising an additional 155,248 sqft. of office space being purpose built for the banking company HSBC. It will be completed in March 2009 (Cushman and Wakefield Lepage, 2009b). According to a commercial news service, the building will also be built using green building technology to achieve a standard of LEEDS Gold (Gilbert, 2008). The site for this building is considered to be the last available one in Discovery Place (ibid.); thus once the building is completed, no further greenfield development opportunities will exist within the precinct. Extremely close to the precinct on the North side of Canada Way and Willingdon Avenue at the Willingdon Green Business Park, another large new office building is also under being built on speculation. It will be completed in 2010 (Cushman and Wakefield Lepage, 2009a).

9.3 Discovery Place, Communicative Regionalism, and MGM Implementation

The narrative in this chapter has provided an outline of key milestones and interactions associated with the development of Discovery Place. A summary of these events is provided in Table 9.1 below:
What additional insights can these events shed on communicative regionalism and MGM outcomes? As discussed in earlier chapters actions taken by local, regional and senior government agencies in direct relation to Metrotown’s development largely helped implement, to the extent possible, the various incarnations of the GVRD’s MGM plans (with

Table 9.1 Discovery Place – Summary of Implementation Actions by Agency

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Vision for Industrial decentralization</th>
<th>Industrial market study</th>
<th>Local area planning &amp; zoning</th>
<th>Land assembly, ownership, and related</th>
<th>Established Discovery Foundation and Discovery Parks Trust</th>
<th>Comprehensive development zoning</th>
<th>Discouraging incompatible uses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Burnaby</td>
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<td>●</td>
<td>■</td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>■</td>
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<td>Greater Vancouver Regional District</td>
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<tr>
<td>Provincial Government</td>
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<td>Federal Government</td>
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■ = lead or shared lead in the action  
● = supporting role  
O = change in direction

1. This vision was initially instigated through provincial economic studies, but quickly adopted by regional and municipal interests.  
2. The Province was active in funding, hiring, and managing a consultant to develop a land use plan for Discovery Place precinct and work collaboratively with Burnaby staff.  
3. The province did not contest Burnaby’s use of this tool; moreover, it eventually recognized it through refinements to legislation and gave the use further legitimacy when it met Burnaby’s zoning / design standards as a landowner.  
4. The Province’s 2008 announcement of plans to build a remand centre to the north of the Discovery Place precinct suggest a shift in direction
a few exceptions). To the extent that it provided for the protection of the region’s industrial land, and provided opportunities for decentralizing industrial jobs from the metropolitan core, Big Bend also helped implement earlier versions of those plans (before conflicts between regional goals came to light). Yet Discovery Place seems to embody an altogether different relationship to regional planning goals, even though its development was aided significantly by local and provincial actions. GVRD policy documents seem generally ambivalent on the growth management role of Discovery Place, although Interviewee G argues that regional direction for the area clearly did not support the business park configuration that emerged.

[Interviewer]: The Province was the landowner [at Discovery Place and began planning it] around 1979... around that time leading up to the regional planning powers being cancelled. [What was the] regional perspective on those plans?

[Interviewee G: ] [The region’s position on Discovery Place today is the same as the region’s position on Big Bend]. It’s just offices badly served by transit in a campus-like environment with nobody being able to walk to work, although it’s a bit better because it’s on the Still Creek corridor, and it’s not that far from the [Skytrain station] at Brentwood and Gilmore. There’s no place-making in there, it’s just a really boring office park, I don’t know if you’ve ever walked in there –it’s not city-building. It just screams of developers making money by flipping land.

Interviewee G’s views notwithstanding, there is no evidence of currently valid regional direction at the board level contesting proposals for Discovery Place. As with the Big Bend Area, to some extent the issue of “industrial blindness” may have been a factor in regional plans’ relative silence on the Discovery Place precinct. But at the same time, more overt involvement in the area’s development by the Province, beginning in the late 1970s (and
continuing after the 1983 removal of regional planning powers), may have sent a clear message from the start that regional direction for the area would neither be appropriate nor welcomed. Moreover, the Province’s goals for the site appeared to resonate with Burnaby given the precinct’s proximity to an existing post-secondary institution (BCIT) and the potential opportunities it presented for joint research, business incubation, and spin-off ventures. Even more importantly, the new focus on high technology opened up opportunities at a time when major shifts were happening in the provincial economy (including an economic recession). Such opportunities were likely welcomed by Burnaby, in light of the municipality’s own experiences with the departure of lumber processing activities (discussed earlier in Chapter 8). In this context, the region’s lack of involvement in discussions in Discovery Place’s future is not surprising – particularly since these discussions were occurring at a time when the GVRD’s planning role was in question, and when what little mandate and resources it possessed were being directed at RTC activities.

The Discovery Park case appears to confirm findings from earlier chapters relating to Burnaby’s role in channelling senior government power (as well as its own) into outcomes that would support Burnaby’s goals. To the extent that the latter meshed with regional goals, such efforts would have also helped implement MGM plans. But in this case, Burnaby’s role seemed to focus more on translating provincial economic development goals (thereby making them part of Burnaby’s vision) than on translating regional goals, as had been the case with Metrotown. The translation occurring in Discovery Park seemed to be motivated both by a recognition of the Province’s power – not just as a regulator, but as the owner of a
large tract of land—and by Burnaby’s apparent perception of mutual advantage in collaboration.

What is also of interest in this regard is the extent to which Burnaby went in protecting the provincial (and local) economic agenda, during consideration and eventual approval of the expansion plans for Electronic Arts, in spite of considerable resident opposition. And, while some undocumented\textsuperscript{245} steps may have been taken to assist with residents’ concerns after the public hearing and prior to final adoption, this episode confirmed the importance of broader economic interests to Burnaby. These economic interests should not be underestimated. For, in a context of steady reductions across Canada in senior government transfers to municipalities during the 1990s and early 2000s (Sancton, 2006), without a healthy business tax base, Burnaby would have few other alternatives to significant (and likely insupportable) residential tax hikes.

Yet despite the economic benefits to Burnaby in this decision, such action likely involved some political risk for Burnaby Council. Residents had been unhappy with the loss of valued greenspace, and might choose in a future election to vote against those members of City Council who had endorsed the Electronic Arts expansion. Notwithstanding resident concerns, Burnaby Council appeared to consider the risk justified in the context of the economic agenda the City shared with the Province for the precinct. In this light, the City

\textsuperscript{245} A requirement in the Local Government Act that no new information be received by Council after the Public Hearing may be responsible for a possible lack of documentation. This requirement does not pertain to municipal staff.
may have perceived the Province’s recent announcement of a remand centre as a form of betrayal of that shared agenda.

From the perspective of communicative regionalism and MGM outcomes, these observations underscore the complexity of interests in interactions between various government agencies during MGM plan implementation. Improvements to theory in this regard need to provide better tools for accounting for this complexity, beyond simplistic exhortations for dialogue between agencies. At a practical scale, regional and local agencies must recognize the need to constantly reinforce (i.e., advocate) to senior government agencies and elected representatives the importance of MGM plans and related on-the-ground decisions. But in doing so, they will need to translate MGM interests into relevant terms for senior government representatives –that is, to explain why collaborating on MGM plan implementation would be of shared benefit across all levels of government. Of course, even with skilled “translators”\textsuperscript{246}, some translations may not be able to outweigh other senior government interests (intended to benefit a larger “public”) which might be fulfilled through actions which weaken certain MGM strategies. This may be the case with the recent decision regarding the Remand Centre proposed next to Discovery Place. Nonetheless, further direction could improve the chances of agencies working in concert with each other on MGM plan implementation. This is not to say that senior governments are “off the hook” for ignoring MGM needs, particularly given their roles in setting the ground roles for MGM in the first place. In an ideal world, the translations would work both ways; that is, senior government agencies may benefit from additional efforts to translate strategic agency

\textsuperscript{246} i.e., people who can make an effective case both for multi-agency collaboration and for the adjustments to various plans and programs which may be needed to facilitate that collaboration
initiatives into terms that better mesh with metropolitan needs, interests and plans. But MGM is ultimately a more localized process; and it needs local champions who are well-positioned to understand the cumulative interplay between various decisions in order to be effective over the long haul.
Chapter 10 - Conclusion

Communicative regionalism stresses the role of dialogue in solving problems related to regional-scale land use matters, and has informed MGM planning in many (but not all) North American jurisdictions over the past three decades. This dissertation has used a case study approach to assess the implications of communicative regionalism as it has unfolded in the planning and development of three suburban employment nodes in an inner suburb of Greater Vancouver from 1966 to 2006. Its aim in doing so is to help enable a more nuanced appreciation of the strengths and weaknesses of deliberative, or dialogue-based approaches to resolving planning problems in terms of their impacts on actual planning outcomes. The purpose of this chapter is to provide a high-level summary of the research, and to propose recommendations for addressing some critical theoretical and practical gaps in communicative regionalism –recommendations which could ultimately help others in furthering the development of post-communicative forms of planning theory and practice.

I chose to study the Vancouver region precisely because of its reputation for livability. While this outcome would appear to result from successful MGM efforts, communicative regionalism has neither been the sole driver of these successes, nor has its influence been entirely positive. Moreover, from a critical studies perspective, it is possible that the GVRD case and the activities of the various actors involved would have been viewed in an even more disparaging light. In fact, several key decisions such as the provincial government’s establishment of the ALR and construction of rapid transit infrastructure (both of which have arguably aided MGM significantly –see Tomalty, 2002) were initiated via “command and
control” actions, on both right and left sides of the provincial political spectrum. The employment nodes in question were chosen for analysis because of their regional economic significance as well as their potential for furthering or detracting from longstanding regional MGM goals. The nodes three have also been of interest given the unique roles that the various levels of government have played in their development.

10.1 Summary of Empirical Results

In analyzing the implications of communicative regionalism, the dissertation made use of a three-part methodology. The first part assessed the degree of communicative regionalism which unfolded across four successive MGM planning phases during the 1966-2006 case study period, using a set of six indicators grounded in communicative planning theory literature (explained in Chapter 5; see also Table 5.5 on p. 207 for summary chart). At a broad level, results were consistently strong across the last three of the four planning phases in terms of: the planner acting as a facilitator; stakeholder participation in plan development (although the development community was not well-represented); ongoing shifts in planning culture; and process designs which reflected the goal of consensus. However, results were largely weak in terms of stakeholder involvement in implementation—a critical factor in determining outcomes. Moreover, results were mostly weak in terms of information sharing—ironically, one of the variables given considerable emphasis by American communicative theorists Forester and Innes.

247 During the early phases of Metrotown’s development, particularly in the 1970s and 1980s, there were some examples of successful stakeholder involvement, particularly between regional and municipal staff; however, the Province was arguably less effectively involved.
Could this simply indicate poor practice by the GVRD and / or the City of Burnaby as the implementing municipality? Such a simplistic verdict might seem unfair, given the extensive public dialogue held during the last three of the four planning phases, and particularly in light of the detailed projections and modelling work done to support the more recent LRSP. Yet the criticism is made based on a failure on the part of both politicians and staff to sufficiently consider the economic and market-based opportunities and constraints with a pivotal role to play in goal realization, and a related failure of staff to bring forward the necessary information on those issues to the wide array of stakeholders involved in plan development and implementation (including the general public as well as government and non-governmental decision-makers) in a meaningful way.

When assessed solely through a communicative planning theory lens, one might be tempted to conclude that improvement would be possible simply with “better efforts next time” in areas of key weakness. Yet such an assessment would be simplistic, particularly in light of some more profound critiques launched against communicative planning literature. Of note in these critiques is communicative planning theory’s ongoing attachment to modernism. The latter has arguably been evident in the tendencies of its literature throughout the 20th c. (and in the early years of the 21st c.) to recommend consensus-based processes in a universalist way. Even more profoundly, and likely bound up with other factors in explaining the GVRD’s relatively weak performance in stakeholder involvement in implementation (and information exchange), is communicative planning theory’s

\[248\] If understandably so, given the constraints posed by the 1983 removal of regional planning powers.
problematic treatment of power. Of specific concern in this regard is communicative theory’s failure, manifest most strongly in the work of Forester and Innes, to sufficiently appreciate:

- how and why stakeholders choose to distort the truth in dialogue;
- the capillary nature of power;
- institutional limitations faced by planners employed by the state who might try to counter distortions in dialogue;
- the potential for some forms of information to be downplayed; and
- an overemphasis on the negative side of power.

Also of concern is communicative theory’s preference for direct, deliberative democracy, which may still be somewhat problematic -- particularly for addressing larger scale problems. Finally, and again particularly evident in the Greater Vancouver case, is communicative theory’s deliberative understanding of action which de-emphasizes the instrumental (discussed in Chapter 3 – see especially p.30 for definition, and p. 50 for more extensive discussion of instrumental action). This is problematic because instrumental action is still needed to enable deliberatively-formulated goals. In this regard one must consider context-specific opportunities and constraints, including time and resource allocations as well as political and project timing considerations.

My research acknowledges these critiques, and has sought to assist planning theorists and practitioners in working towards a post-communicative approach to solving planning
problems – particularly in MGM initiatives. To this end, the second part of my research methodology used an additional theoretical lens (ANT) to compensate for communicative planning weaknesses observed both in the literature review and the case study. Specifically, the use of and ANT lens compensates for what I will term the “outcome blindness” of communicative planning theory, or the lack of interest in actions which have any other purpose but to facilitate dialogue. ANT enables consideration of more instrumental or result-oriented forms of action without losing sight of the relationships that underscores the role of connections between actors in determining and enabling action. The nature of these connections may be shaped by status differences, but may also be formed in spite of them. This second part made use of ANT to explore relational events between relevant government actors which ultimately impacted outcomes. The application of an ANT methodology to help critique an existing theory represents both a novel way of examining communicative theory and a novel application of ANT.

This second aspect of the methodology considered the nature of networks or connections between actors in influencing MGM processes and outcomes. It examined various texts (Table 3.3, p. 71), and considered the results of interviews with seven individuals representing local, regional, and provincial levels of government. Six of the individuals interviewed possessed a history of involvement in the formulation of policies relevant to MGM planning and the three employment nodes studied. The seventh interviewee currently possesses the responsibility for coping with the results of that policy legacy. While interviews with politicians, developers, and office market experts would undoubtedly have contributed information of value to this research, such results would have produced an
unwieldy scope. By focusing on staff, the research was able to examine these connections at greater depth, including the role of instability in shaping actor responses, as well as the role of various texts in governing inter-agency relationships in plan implementation. (Table 3.3). This approach has its limitations of course. A key weakness is that, as described by one of its leading proponents (Bruno Latour), an analysis based on ANT might have no end. This is because one could be tempted to identify an infinite number of connections between an infinite number of actors. For this reason, other theorists (e.g. Stalder, 1997) have recommended that the researcher make a judgement call in limiting the size of the network, recognizing that such delineation will result in some omissions. In my dissertation two such omissions were local politicians and the development community.

The third part of the analysis, which occurred, throughout the discussion, described the extent to which outcomes for these nodes did or did not meet goals set out for them in the relevant regional scale MGM plan. In terms of outcomes, my research found that desired employment-related outcomes for the MGM strategy have not been sufficiently met to date. This is hardly news, as it is confirmed by the regional planning agency’s own monitoring reports (see especially GVRD, 2000, 2001a, 2002, 2004a, 2004b and 2005). At the same time, these results were accompanied by a shift in GVRD attention to the increasingly complex commuting patterns which had evolved since the 1970s, with an increasing proportion of commuter trips happening between suburbs, rather than just from the suburbs into downtown (an ongoing trend acknowledged in Translink, 2008, p. 13). It may be that what momentum once existed behind the RTC concept has dissipated not just in light of market pressures, but
in the face of actual results and the corresponding new needs generated by those results.

Such dissipation was not directly acknowledged by interviewees. Nonetheless:

- Actual results (in terms of the total proportion of office space and employment in Metrotown relative to other parts of Burnaby, including Big Bend and Discovery Place);
- The continued popularity of business parks both locally and at a global scale; (Coriolis, 1993; Weissner, 1999; Hartshorn and Muller, 2002; Lang 2003);
- The general need for business taxes among all municipalities, not just those containing RTCs; and
- Commentary made by Metro Vancouver (formerly the GVRD) in literature connected with the update of the LRSP which is now in process (2009b);

combine to suggest diminished momentum behind the RTC concept in managing metropolitan employment growth.

The GVRD’s MGM plans since 1976 have sought to concentrate the bulk of regional employment growth, and especially regional office space, in RTCs. Have these plans been successful? Only partly. As of 2002 the Metrotown RTC had a total of 255,881 m$^2$ (2.75 million sqft.) of office floor space; and 328,470 m$^2$ (3.54 million sqft.) of retail (Burnaby, 2002). As of 2006 it had 28,000 residents and 22,900 jobs (Metro Vancouver, 2009a). This is certainly progress when compared to the state of affairs in 1976 – and likely an improvement over what might have happened without any regional plan. Yet according to an independent real estate report commissioned by the GVRD, whereas 52% of all Burnaby

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$^{249}$ see Lewis, 1996 for further discussion.
office space was located in Metrotown in 1990, by 2000 this proportion had shrunk to less than one-third of the municipal total, or 29%. Conversely, huge gains were seen in Burnaby’s business parks (including ones located in Big Bend and Discovery Park). Business parks in total went from accommodating 48% of Burnaby’s total municipal office space in 1990 to accommodating 70% of the municipal total in 2000 (Royal LePage, 2001). While industrial areas had long been envisioned as an important source of regional employment in GVRD MGM planning, they were not expected to be a major competitor to the RTCs for office locations.

While it has long been a strong retail node, in some respects, Metrotown’s dominance as an office centre in Burnaby has never been a sure bet. Even in the 1970s when offices were even more heavily concentrated in the Vancouver CBD than they are today, Metrotown still had less than half (38%) of total Burnaby office space in 1977 (Goldberg and Harwood, 1978, p. 26).

In comparison, the Big Bend node in the case study (not designated as a RTC) has the capacity to accommodate a larger number of jobs and larger amount of office space than currently exist in Metrotown. While current data from the Big Bend node are not available, as of 2004, 63,170 m² (680,000 sqft.) of office space had been developed on 45 acres of the Glenlyon business park alone; and when fully built out, it will comprise 133 acres and over 185,800 m² (2 million sqft.) of office space (Glenlyon Business Park, 2004). The other three new business parks within this area lie to the east of Glenlyon, and are market-generated, including the Riverfront Business Park; the Burnaby Business Park, and Glenwood Industrial
Estates. At present these lands have been subdivided and serviced; but construction has not yet begun. In total, the four business parks combined will provide for 373 acres of business park lands. If the remaining three parks in the Big Bend area are built out to at an average floor area ratio of 0.5 Floor Area Ratio\textsuperscript{250} (FAR), which is less than the permitted range allowed in the plan of from 0.8 to 1.2 FAR, they could accommodate up to 483,100 m\textsuperscript{2} (5.2 million sqft.) of additional office-type space (author’s calculation). As of 2006 the Big Bend area has 9,500 jobs\textsuperscript{251} (Metro Vancouver, 2009a). Burnaby’s own estimate of future jobs in this area at build-out (once all development potential is realized) is 18,000 (Interviewee F).

Discovery Place as a business park is much smaller, with a total of 60,390 m\textsuperscript{2} (650,000 sqft.) of office, including the recently Discovery Green building (Discovery Parks, 2009b).

However, the surrounding precinct centred on Willingdon Avenue and Canada Way is much larger, and again competes with Metrotown for potential office clients. Including this larger precinct, the Discovery Place / Willingdon area has 5,150 residents and 8,150 jobs as of 2006 (Metro Vancouver, 2009a). In this regard, both Big Bend and Discovery Place / Willingdon have reached the job targets initially expected for Metrotown in the mid-1970s. This suggests that both nodes now also play significant roles in both Burnaby’s and the GVRD’s respective urban hierarchies.

\textsuperscript{250} A site’s floor area ratio expresses the ratio of total floor space to site area. If a site is 10,000 m\textsuperscript{2} in size, and its floor area ratio is 0.5, the total amount of built floor space is 5,000 m\textsuperscript{2}. Many zoning regulations, and even some plans, as is the case in Burnaby, express maximum permitted density on a site in terms of a floor area ratio.

\textsuperscript{251} With residential only at the very edge of this node, Big Bend has a population of 65 (Metro Vancouver, 2009a).
Unlike Metrotown, neither of the other nodes was or is served by rapid transit. To be fair, neither the GVRD nor the Transport 2021 strategy had anticipated that industrial areas would become significant sources of office employment (which might provide some justification for rapid transit). While some bus service is now being provided to the business park portions of these nodes, it is not nearly as frequent as service via Skytrain (rapid transit); thus, it lacks the equivalent potential to reduce the need for single-occupant vehicle commutes to and from either these areas of Burnaby\textsuperscript{252}. That said, planning efforts could enhance the sense of connection at both nodes to Metrotown (and to other destinations through Metrotown). This could include examining options for additional transit linkages to the RTC (including light rail options), as well as the creation of additional mixed use corridors linking the three nodes to each other.

\section*{10.2 Assessing the Relationship Between Communicative Regionalism and Case Study Outcomes}

From the outset, this research has focused on examining two research questions:

1) What has communicative regionalism meant for plan implementation for selected suburban employment nodes in the Greater Vancouver region from 1966 to 2006?

And

2) Based on events and results for the three employment nodes studied, what potential strengths and limitations does communicative regionalism pose for MGM outcomes?

\textsuperscript{252} Mode share data by employment node has not been made available; however, anecdotally, Metro Vancouver staff interviewed have suggested that single occupant vehicle remains by far the dominant mode share for commuter trips to and from both the Big Bend and Discovery Place nodes.
The simple answer to these questions is that results have been mixed. This verdict is partly determined by on-the-ground outcomes, in terms of employment and office space in the three nodes studied. More importantly, it is also determined by the varied reactions of relevant actors to the communicative processes themselves. For, if communicative processes were a complete success, one would have expected a positive feedback loop to emerge, where all actors came to fully abide by those processes, eventually taking only communicative forms of action. Yet there were many instances where various actors stepped away from, or else heavily supplemented, communicative regionalism. In both instances, more instrumental forms of action dominated. And such modes of action were frequently dependent on the power resources that a given actor was able to channel in support of the outcomes it desired.

Such resources were most frequently used by the provincial government, which used both its allocative and authoritative resources to support outcomes in the Province’s interest. Some of these outcomes reinforced aspects of the MGM plan of the day, including provincial government construction of the Expo Skytrain line (which opened in 1986 to Metrotown’s great benefit). Yet the Province also chose not to support the land assembly program envisioned for Metrotown, instead preferring to invest in the Alex Fraser Bridge. The latter also shifted the timing and prioritization of municipal road network components in Burnaby’s Big Bend Area (and benefitted the latter). The Province further used its power in the planning and development of provincially-owned land in the Discovery Place area; and it also did so in later choosing to plan for a new remand centre at the edge of the precinct (arguably not compatible with the Discovery Place vision).
Likewise, the City of Burnaby used its power to alternately supplement communicative regionalism (e.g., in an attempt to continue implementing a communicatively-derived goal), or to step away from communicative regionalism. For example, Burnaby used its own allocative resources (money) to provide for a bus loop at the Metrotown Skytrain Station, in an attempt both to leverage more influence with a provincial government following an arbitrary approach to realizing its goals, and to ensure that a larger number of Burnaby residents outside the Metrotown area could benefit from Skytrain’s enhanced connections to the rest of the region. In doing so, Burnaby also reinforced the MGM goal of making Metrotown a vital, transit-supportive precinct which was receptive to decentralized employment concentrations.

Burnaby used its allocative (land) resources in Big Bend, and good relations with other large landowners in the area (including the federal government) in furthering the development of the Big Bend industrial area. To the extent that industrial decentralization had been explicitly supported in earlier (pre-1996) MGM plans, such moves somewhat helped with MGM plan implementation. Yet the allowance of offices in business parks (which relied on Burnaby-led policy and zoning changes, in turn enabled by authoritative resources) also detracted from the goals for Metrotown as an office precinct. To be fair, the diminished scope of the 1970s land assembly program (combined with a declining traditional office market overall for much of the 1980s and 1990s) likely had the larger impact on Metrotown’s slower office space growth. Moreover, by the time Burnaby staff proposed to change both the OCP and zoning bylaw in ways that would allow offices in Big Bend business parks, market conditions had changed and there was no longer a legally valid regional plan in place.
Thus to the extent that Burnaby staff still felt obligated to consult at all with the GVRD, one could argue that such dialogue remained a somewhat positive outcome of communicative regionalism.

An example of a clearly negative result of communicative regionalism occurred with the decision in the late 1970s to discourage offices from the Vancouver CBD as it played out in the case of the BC Tel headquarters (eventually located in Burnaby, directly next to the border between the two municipalities). This decision had evolved as a means of implementing the highly communicative 1976 LRP, and the specific goal of decentralizing offices and population to RTCs like Metrotown. The rationale for the decision was linked to a communicatively-derived goal, which was positive in itself. Yet the way it unfolded did not sit well with the development community; and it became one more irritant in the tensions building at the time between the Province and its largest settlement area, which ultimately culminated in the 1983 loss of regional planning power.

While it is easy to look back in hindsight, the BC Tel episode suggests that an important set of stakeholders lacked sufficient input opportunities on the implementation of this goal. On first blush, this shortcoming seems to represent a failure in the application of communicative regionalism, rather than the theory behind it. And yet, I believe this application failure may in fact represent a type of theoretical failure in the end. For, as noted in the critiques of communicative planning in Chapter 2, one of the theory’s weaknesses (as described in the literature thus far) is its inability to acknowledge (or consequently mitigate) the many reasons actors in a given planning process might avoid participating in a communicative process.
To be fair, the application of communicative planning principles was still in its infancy at this period—both in this region and in other places, including regions in California such as San Diego (see Innes, 1992). But I also believe that it speaks to a need for further elaboration in theory and practice, on how to effectively involve certain groups of powerful non-governmental stakeholders, such as developers. This is in part because the latter may be less inclined to participate directly in large public processes. Such unwillingness may relate to time and resource impacts (which a profit-focused individual would want to avoid), and to the propensity for public process attendees to be critical, rather than supportive, of developers (author’s personal experience). Particular challenges to involving developers in regional plan implementation may also exist. Plan implementation tends to involve more detailed technical considerations, which could require a considerable learning curve for members of the general public. Developers may possess sufficient technical knowledge to be able to participate effectively in implementation discussions; however, if they are included for this reason, while the general public is omitted during this stage because of a lack of knowledge (and time resources), there is a risk of equity concerns arising if developer inclusion is not handled carefully. This is because there could be a perception of developers as having an undue or imbalanced influence. While it is beyond the scope of this dissertation to propose how such inclusion might be handled in a fair manner, the dilemma of appropriate stakeholder participation at appropriate plan development and implementation stages suggests a need for more research in this area. Such research could include the development of more detailed best practices. It might also be linked with the development of a typology of stakeholder involvement models which might provide for different approaches to
stakeholder consultation subject to context, using criteria to decide which model might work best in a given situation.

A further mixed result from communicative regionalism is evident in the total office space achieved in the Metrotown node from the 1970s through to the present day. While Metrotown’s development *per se* has arguably been impacted by communicative regionalism throughout this period, such efforts in the office sphere were not sufficient to outweigh activities happening both in the marketplace and in planning and development efforts elsewhere in the region, including the other two nodes considered in this case study. In essence, instability in other aspects of the MGM network\(^ {253}\), affecting actors’ commitments to previously agreed goals and implementation strategies\(^ {254}\), created a strong momentum for activities outside the Metrotown RTC which detracted from its initially envisaged regional employment function. But office employment outcomes in Metrotown may also have been better (or at least expectations more realistic) had there been more willingness in the mid-1980s and early 1990s to truly re-examine MGM goals for the RTCs in light of what was happening in nearby business parks such as Big Bend. This likely did not occur because it might have upset the fragile municipal coalition around regional planning while it remained “illegal” –that is, no longer permitted nor recognized under the provincial legislation which enabled local governments to exist. The desire to reduce conflict would have also prevailed later as the new provincial growth strategies legislation –which depended on GVRD and municipal support (Interviewee A, 2008) —was being formulated.

\(^{253}\) particularly in the realm of provincial politics, as well as an economic recession, both described in Chapter 5

\(^{254}\) e.g., the land assembly strategy for Metrotown described in Chapter 7
Readers are also reminded that both the Big Bend and Discovery Place nodes studied in this research had been in compliance with the regional goals which prevailed at the time the nodes were planned. In 1976 the notion of industrial suburbanization was still relatively new; and the trend of more hybrid types of uses, including offices being attracted to business parks, would not yet have been recognized in a significant way. This was not a shortcoming in the 1976 plan—particularly since there would have been every expectation at the time it was developed of an eventual replacement in the form of a renewed vision in the mid 1980s. The expected new plan would have been able to address any larger scale social and economic changes which arose in the interim. But with the removal of regional planning powers, regional planning efforts would, by necessity, have been focused to a greater degree on holding together the consensus that had existed prior to 1983.

In the post-1983 aftermath (following the provincial annulment of regional planning powers, and the continued struggles by the GVRD and its more supportive member municipalities to maintain the regional planning coalition which had been legally enshrined until then), what I would call the conceptual agility for appropriately responding to emerging social and economic patterns, would have been greatly diminished. Such a political context would have created strong pressure to avoid conflict or difficult debate on policy matters. This would have also created problematic circumstances for plan implementation. Why would this be the case? As political documents, plans themselves contain tensions. And, as with most tensions, these signify that some meaningful action could potentially occur around the topic areas which embody them. Some tensions will remain unresolved until the point of implementation. Other tensions, by their very nature, will be exacerbated by implementation.
A good long term planning framework recognizes both potential trajectories for its tensions; consequently it recommends plan renewal—a step intended to re-examine whether implementation has yielded desired results, and whether a new course of action is needed in light of those results.

The GVRD flux in regional planning powers from 1983 until 1995 may have prevented sufficient introspection around the tensions contained in previous incarnations of the region’s MGM strategy. Energies during this period were consequently focused on:

- Coping with the practicalities of functioning in a system that no longer included explicit (formal) guidance (including land use designations) at the regional level;
- Continuing to implement the 1976 LRP and 1980 Official Regional Plan created prior to the 1983 loss of regional planning powers—to the extent that this was possible; or
- Steadily working towards finding room to develop a new plan, which did not upset the municipal coalition or conflict with long anticipated provincial growth strategies legislation.

Renewal of the regional vision through the Creating Our Future exercise (which eventually culminated in the new LRSP in 1996) yielded some positive outcomes. These included the creation of the “Green Zone” (urban containment boundary) concept, and considerable inter-municipal information-sharing which culminated in a best-practices inventory and did enable the successful provision of higher density housing infill around several key rapid transit...
nodes\textsuperscript{255}. Nonetheless, given the climate of the day, the tensions embodied in the 1976 plan between economic development objectives and settlement pattern objectives remained insufficiently examined.

There were, of course, more positive results from applications of communicative regionalism in the development of the three nodes analysed. The initial LRP development process launched in the early 1970s was the first of the MGM plans to take a highly deliberative approach, intended to facilitate extensive dialogue and mutual learning among participants\textsuperscript{256}. Subsequent to this process, perhaps the most high profile example of a positive application of communicative regionalism revolved around efforts to keep regional planning alive in Greater Vancouver during its period of “illegality” after regional planning powers were removed. (This period lasted formally from late 1983 to 1995.) That is, member municipalities were sufficiently agreed on broader regional goals\textsuperscript{257} and the value of regional planning services that they were willing to continue investing in them.

That said, the actual removal of regional planning powers may have arisen from political strife between the GVRD and the Province, which was exacerbated by some gaps in how communicative regionalism was practiced in the initial development of the LRP in the 1970s, in terms of ensuring the ongoing involvement of key stakeholders (i.e., the Province and the

\textsuperscript{255}Ground-oriented Medium Density Housing Inventory, mentioned in Chapter 5
\textsuperscript{256}see Table 5.5 in Chapter 5 for more assessment of each MGM plan according to criteria for communicative regionalism.
\textsuperscript{257}Voting records for decisions connected with the adoption of plans at various phases have not been researched. However, given that the GVRD Board includes representatives from all member municipalities, and given that resolutions endorsing the adoption of each MGM strategy was passed by the board (notwithstanding some substantive disagreements on the interpretation of certain provisions in the 1996 LRSP), it is safe to assume that there has been agreement in principle.
development community). Moreover, closer examination of interagency relations showed that efforts to sustain regional planning through communicative regionalism during the 1983-1995 period also relied on instrumental action in addition to (and at times instead of) the deliberative action underpinning communicative regionalism. This was in part because dialogue between provincial and regional stakeholders during this period of “regional planning by stealth” was facilitated by strong pre-existing friendships between two key individuals (one on staff at the GVRD and one employed by the BC Ministry of Municipal Affairs). Such dialogue allowed both agencies to manoeuvre through this period while avoiding an arbitrary provincial blockage to voluntary (and technically illegal) regional planning.

This instrumental action in support of communicative regionalism included a form of political influence occurring at the bureaucratic level; but it also speaks to the role of trust in facilitating certain kinds of dialogue. The notion of trust has garnered some recent research interest (Braithwaite and Levi, 1998; Cook, 2001; Yamagishi, 2001; Swain and Tait, 2007;). Trust is not tantamount to gullibility, but has been defined as “believing communications in the absence of clear or strong reasons for not believing (that is in ambiguous situations” (Rotter, 1980 in Yamagishi, 2001, p. 124). A critical feature of trust appears to be the need for conscious efforts and specific social skills (Yamagishi, 2001, p. 126). There may be value in further exploring the role of trust in MGM planning processes, including ways in which it can be more actively fostered.
Other clearly positive MGM goal results from communicative included stakeholder implementation by Burnaby in developing Metrotown in accordance with RTC notions from various incarnations of the regional MGM plan, i.e., the translation of regional goals into local terms. This could be explained by a combination of positive working relationships between Burnaby and GVRD staff, evident in several episodes (reinforced by strong support from Burnaby politicians). Such relationships were assisted by information exchange, and realized by virtue of both agencies’ staff possessing strong technical and political skills, which included a good sense of political timing. This was evident in changes to parking requirements, informed at a broad level by a GVRD study (discussed in detail in Chapter 7). Ultimately the latter efforts helped fulfill the intensification aspects (residential and commercial) of the LRP and LRSP goals for Metrotown. Office development was not as successful as hoped (see discussion above). That said, the collaborative study on impediments to office development in RTCs undertaken by Burnaby, the GVRD and the Province in 2003 (also discussed at length in Chapter 7) is a further example of how stakeholder collaboration in plan implementation (criterion #4 from Table 3.1) occurred, albeit at a much later stage, and after other efforts and initiatives had unfolded, including the adoption of the new growth strategies legislation in 1995. The interagency study sought to clarify issues and opportunities for developing office space in RTCs. Finally, the development of the 1995 provincial Growth Strategies Act, which itself involved a highly participatory process among local government and provincial stakeholders (although not the public at large), is another major example of communicative regionalism, adapted for considerations of scale, with the presumptions that local officials would represent the

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258 As well as other member municipalities
interests of their respective electorates. But *Growth Strategies Act* development was also highly dependent on other elements, including the agreement of all British Columbia local governments (see Chapter 5 for more extensive discussion). While deliberative, the success of this process—in fact, the ability to even launch the process—owed much to the political skills of individual bureaucratic and political actors directly involved, including an acute sense of political timing. It further benefited from political instability at the provincial level, in terms of changes to the reigning political party, which enhanced receptivity to a larger degree of change to legislation governing MGM.

### 10.3 Implications for Theory-Building, Practice and Research

What do these case study findings mean for theory-building, planning practice and further research? As noted in Chapter 3, I have sought to use this research, in the manner described by Flyvbjerg, to produce a single black swan that nullifies the theory that all swans are white. In this instance the black swan falsifies the presumption that applying communicative regionalism must yield positive results. Given that disappointing outcomes were achieved in terms of regional employment concentration goals, my research has pointed to some critical theoretical (and practical) gaps in communicative regionalism. It has done so in a tangible way that illustrates the type of relational dynamics that can alternately yield both success and failure within a communicative planning framework. Through heightened awareness of those relational dynamics in metropolitan planning exercises (as well as other settings), planners may be in a better position to avoid the overgeneralizations and uncritical acceptance of communicative planning, which the literature has slowly begun to recognize.
In this regard, my case study findings both build on, and critique, the works of communicative planning theorists Forester, Healey, and Innes who have championed this approach and whose works were discussed at length in Chapter 2. In doing so it also reinforces the critical analysis of others, including Huxley and Yiftachel, Flyvbjerg, Murray, McGuirk and, to a lesser extent, Fainstein. It also suggests that the practice-based optimism of Harcourt et al (2007) regarding communicative practice and positive outcomes may have been unwarranted; and further confirms the broader critiques made by Artibise and Meligrana (2005) of the region’s preparedness to face ongoing livability challenges. For example, while both Forester’s and Innes’s works recognize that planners have an ability to shape attention and to adjust planning processes, their work does not sufficiently acknowledge the strength of the forces which exist in opposition to planners’ power (such as a senior government, as occurred during one period of the case study). Moreover, both Forester’s work and Healey’s earlier work also failed to acknowledge the contingencies of place (e.g. governance structure; history with, and relative political support for, growth management) which cause the relational dynamics which might help or hinder communicative planning processes, and thereby also impact outcomes. Finally, all three theorists have missed opportunities to provide planners with constructive suggestions for: coping with power differentials in the deliberation process; and launching instrumental (non-deliberative) forms of action needed to help realize the very goals developed through communicative planning processes.

259 Her more recent work (e.g. Coaffee and Healey 2003; see also Healey, 2004) has shifted towards a greater acknowledgement of place.
A Way Forward

While one option could be to remedy these gaps within a communicative planning framework, my concern is that the communicative planning theory informing communicative regionalism ultimately has too much “baggage” for this approach to be productive. In particular, its links with modernism and universal prescription may be too strong. These are particularly evident when communicative methods are adopted without sufficient consideration of whether they will be fruitful in a given context. This assessment arises both from communicative planning theory’s: 1) frequent misapplication in real world settings; 2) genuine gaps vis-a-vis understanding the workings of allocative and authoritative power in dialogue processes; 3) insufficient attention to context; and 4) commensurate (unrealistic) expectations for planners.

In a related vein, several scholars have expressed concern about the relative narrowness of planning theory literature (Soja, 1996; Allmendinger, 2002; Pallagst, 2006). While not specifically lamenting the lack of attention to outcome, their complaints underscore the need to improve upon communicative planning theory. In some respects this is not surprising, given that communicative regionalism (and the communicative planning theory upon which it is based) aims at addressing the process of how planning should unfold (who should do it using what knowledge) rather than the desired spatial model for planning efforts to achieve

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260 While communicative methods may have been all that remained open to the GVRD following the 1983 removal of regional planning powers, it is interesting that when growth strategies legislation was finally under consideration by the Province, GVRD staff were less interested in having new alternatives to communicative methods (Interviewee B, cited earlier in Chapter 5).
(outcomes). But without connecting the process back to the outcomes, it is difficult to gauge its true value. Moreover, opportunities for achieving goals which are expressed through public deliberations—including goals for advancing sustainability—are lost.

This is not to say that planners and decision-makers should stop using dialogue and mutual learning to address complex problems and situations requiring innovation. To the extent that it has furthered planners’ willingness to experiment with (and gain knowledge of) these techniques, earlier work tracing the parameters of communicative planning theory and communicative regionalism has been useful. But I am arguing that the use of dialogue and mutual learning techniques need to be framed differently. They should not be offered as a panacea in difficult planning contexts. Rather, we are now at a point where theorists need to offer clearer criteria and expectations for their use in specific types of setting. This could ideally happen either as a substantial elaboration and re-examination of communicative planning theory, or through the development of a new theory.

How might the weaknesses of communicative planning and communicative regionalism been mitigated in the Greater Vancouver case study? To some extent, one could argue that various actors within the case study made selective mitigations at various points in time; and that such mitigations essentially constituted the “grease that moved the wheels” of communicative regionalism. Arguably one of the more striking examples of mitigating for communicative weaknesses occurred during the 1983-1995 period, when MGM occurred strictly on a voluntary basis, and was kept alive through the deft political skills and nimble responses of regional planners and those municipal planners who supported MGM. Of
course, an over-reliance on communicative processes might have contributed to the 1983 “crisis” (i.e., removal of planning powers) in the first place, because it created a false sense that regional and municipal assent to MGM plans were all that were required (whereas in fact, the Province’s assent was also needed—and had been sorely lacking). I have suggested, in my analysis of outcomes in the various employment nodes, that this long period of voluntary regionalism had a critical negative impact on some of the outcomes observed in the case study, particularly given the destabilizing impact that the removal of a more powerful previous structure might have had. This is not to pin all the blame for this structural shift on the Province; for in hindsight, with a better toolkit of post-communicative practices, the 1983 crisis might have been avoided. Under such circumstances, there would have been a much higher probability of receptivity among planning professionals and local politicians to considering new information—including research which questioned some of the premises of the RTC strategy, and adapting the MGM strategy in ways which still supported the original intentions while acknowledging major societal shifts such as the increasing popularity of business parks and a need for greater business competitiveness arising from new trade agreements like NAFTA (discussed briefly in Chapter 8).

In re-examining communicative planning theory or developing a new theory, this dissertation appears to support calls made by other theorists for the development of a post-communicative approach to theory and practice. This includes Alexander’s (2001) direct plea for a post-communicative theory which builds upon communicative theory’s desires for improved understanding between stakeholders, but which remedies its shortcomings by clearly rejecting the notion of dialogue as a panacea. A post-communicative theory would
also be compatible with Sandercock’s (2004a) recommendation for more of a tool-box or situational approach to the use of theory. I believe that my dissertation will provide some useful material for others seeking to undertake these tasks, particularly within the context of MGM. MGM presents a uniquely complex type of planning challenge, given the multi-jurisdictional issues it addresses. No two metropolitan regions will find the same solutions to their growth management issues; but the following five suggestions might be of use in devising portions of the toolkit of direct relevance to MGM.

1. Explicitly Appreciating the Link Between Power and Action.

As observed in Chapter Two, a specific weakness of communicative planning (and thus of communicative regionalism) voiced by its critics is an insufficient acknowledgement of the role of power in all its complexities in shaping actions and outcomes. The four subsequent recommendations all implicitly touch on things which will be of benefit to carrying out this recommendation. But the issue of power is sufficiently important to mention here in its own right. In discussing power, it is presumed that MGM and other forms of planning must continue to adhere to their transformative values—but that further means of realizing these values are needed.

Within the specific context of MGM policy formation, Hamin (2003) has called for greater attention to power dynamics, arguing that current US primers on growth management tend to ignore power distribution consequences from this activity (pp. 376-378). So if power is relevant to planners involved in MGM, why are techniques, strategies, and analyses
addressing how to work with power structures not more explicit in this literature? This issue may arise from planners’ deep-seated discomfort with power (Baum, 1987) – something which, if remedied, could lead to more opportunities to achieving positive and transformative outcomes (see Baum, 1997). Building from this observation, and from Sandercock’s observations that highly skilled planners often work intuitively behind the scenes to shape political agendas and frame the issues which politicians must confront (2004b, p. 136), further case study research on the different ways in which power might be channelled through MGM processes would be of value.

Related to this is the role of trust in MGM processes. Trust in itself may arguably represent a type of power, or at least be a precondition for the effective channelling of power. In this vein, it also merits further research in MGM settings.

Another point to make about power is the need for more research in the MGM process into the possible network uses of power bases, both positive and negative, in a growth management setting. The work of Dredge, 2006; Cook and Emerson, 1978; Coaffee and Healey (2003) may be useful conceptual starting points for such research. Ultimately, the development of typologies for network uses of power within MGM contexts is encouraged. Such typologies would recognize a need for different approaches to channelling network power for growth management ends depending on the degree of legislative empowerment that exists to enable MGM activities (see for example, Nelson and Dawkins 2004 typology of urban containment approaches according to their relative strength and degree of implementation authority); the degree of economic and political dominance possessed by a
given metropolitan region; the history within both a given region and its broader provincial or state context vis-à-vis growth management; and the number and complexity of smaller (e.g. municipal) jurisdictions within a given region where MGM is undertaken.

A final point to make regarding power is the need for more planning scholar attention to ways of blending the needs of instrumental action with the needs of deliberative action. This will necessarily involve the consideration of how advocates of MGM planning recognize and make use of various forms of opportunity and constraint which may arise in specific contexts. Such variables may include time and resource allocations as well as political and project management timing considerations.

2. Further Insights into Instability and its Opportunities and Threats for MGM

Throughout my case study research, I have pointed to several instances where instability happening outside the regional system (e.g.: political instability at the provincial, i.e., senior government level; and economic instability in the form of a recession) curtailed movements towards greater MGM cooperation. I have also explained how instability has alternately created new opportunities for conducting MGM planning. The latter occurred in the case study when there was a change of senior government in the early 1990s, subsequently enabling the introduction of growth strategies legislation. Additional case study research, coupled with insights from behavioural and organizational psychology and sociology, as well as political science, might help us develop new models for understanding how to better cope with, and take advantage of, instability in ways which might help create better opportunities.
for MGM planning. Approaches for positively channelling instability to the benefit of MGM outcomes will depend broadly on planners’ ability to engage with power (see point #1 above). More specifically, they will also depend on their sensitivity to the timing of action, as discussed in Chapter Two.

In a related vein, more in-depth understandings of the relationship between instability and “interpretive drift” (Healey, 1997) from agreed goals would also be of value. And, on this latter topic, it is important to recognize that having an appropriate legal framework for communicative regionalism will not guarantee that the latter actually ensues. For example, where the framework provides for strong region-scale controls over land uses (which was the case for well over a decade in Greater Vancouver), there is potential for support for existing frameworks to weaken when MGM activities appear to threaten senior government interests—particularly in a climate of political and economic instability or uncertainty. In such contexts, regional and local-scale advocates of MGM activities may benefit from paying particular attention to pressures and potential trigger points at senior government levels, as well as proactive relationships with senior scale actors in advance of, or as a preventative for, any instability occurring. Such relationships may not prevent frameworks from weakening or being altered; but, as also shown in the Greater Vancouver case, they may later provide a staging point from which to resume work in rebuilding or adapting them appropriately.
3. **Place Greater Emphasis in Research and Practice on Effective Differentiated Stakeholder Consultation Approaches**

Stakeholder consultation in goal formulation is important. In this vein, planners undertaking MGM must constantly find ways of ensuring that network boundaries are sufficiently flexible to promote appropriate stakeholder involvement at the right point of time. This raises the related need to ensure that large-scale public processes do not detract from consultation with other stakeholders (including representatives from other levels of government as well as developers) who may be more comfortable operating through less communicative (e.g., political influence) approaches. This approach implicitly recognizes that some actors will continue to believe that they have something to lose in open dialogue with the public; and it may take more than one consultation exercise to create shifts in such beliefs. In the interim, it may be necessary to either find ways of feeding these perspectives back into the public process, or to be clear about the limited scope of influence that the broader public might be able to have on certain goals and outcomes. In some respects, the requirement for an Intergovernmental Advisory Committee in the 1996 British Columbia Growth Strategies Act (now incorporated in the **Local Government Act**), which was discussed in this case study, embodies such an approach. It allows for frank discussion between local government staff and the staff of provincial agencies regarding shared implementation opportunities as well as potential conflicts between provincial and regional goals. To some extent, this example (along with the participation issues it speaks to) also ties in with one of the critiques made in Chapter Two regarding the possible conflicts between direct and representative democracy. Senior government agencies, tend to deal with a much larger number of localities than do
regional agencies; and they thus have limited resources for engaging in direct democracy. As a result, they are far more reliant on representative democracy than may be the case with regional and local land use planners. Without sensitive accommodation of these differences, dialogue between senior and local agencies might otherwise be impossible. Further research could help provide new techniques for incorporating the results of such “off-line” types of discussion into broader public dialogue processes.

In a related vein, there may be times when consultation “short cuts” still produce both good outcomes with stakeholder support. To some extent, such short cuts might be related to the pre-existing planning culture in a given context, where some issues have already been worked out. To borrow from Coaffee and Healey’s (2003) model of organizational change for a moment, the shortcuts may take place in situations where there is a set of routines and processes have been established for addressing certain questions and issues, which remove the need to revisit them in broader forums (like MGM). If we think of MGM as happening in a network, (in some respects akin to a single organization, although in other respects not), then further case study research which elaborates on the process of creating, and then relying on, such routines in a MGM context could be beneficial.

4. **Best Practices in Information-Sharing to Build Support for MGM**

More detailed research is needed to develop best practice for using the information-sharing aspect of MGM planning, and broader regional planning efforts, as a way to build new (or strengthen existing) bases of support for MGM planning among local jurisdictions. Indeed,
the need for best practices on this and other aspects of decision-making processes involving multiple stakeholders has also been flagged by Dorsey and McDaniels (2001). Alternately put using Healey’s terminology, such research would describe how focused information sharing can help to build and/or consolidate broader “repertoires for action”. This suggestion builds on Visser’s (2004) case study, which found that information-sharing and research services by metropolitan planning departments helped to ensure ongoing buy-in for MGM planning efforts in the absence of formal requirements for local governments to participate in MGM.

5. Further Insights into the Role of Translation in Establishing MGM Frameworks and Outcomes

My research has also described several instances where the presence of skilled “translators” has had a positive impact on MGM outcomes, and in the development of broader frameworks for the practice of MGM (e.g. developing the British Columbia Growth Strategies Act). In using this term “translation”, I have drawn on Yanow’s (2004) definition and case study research261, stressing the local, expert knowledge of at least two organizational or quasi-organizational group cultures (p. S15). It should be noted that translators may also be virtuoso social actors in Flyvbjerg’s (2001) sense of the term, and vice versa, but these two modes of acting are overlapping rather than coterminous. Here again, further research into the skill sets needed for effective translation, as well as the specific conceptual tools

261 Yarrow’s 2000 research on interpretive policy analysis is also of use in this regard, although it does not specifically employ the term “translation”.
translators draw upon, might have useful applicability for scholars and practitioners of MGM planning. This research might be of particular use in helping to bring forward perspectives which are difficult or unpopular, such as in the industrial land matters which, notwithstanding studies completed, were given relatively short shrift in GVRD (prior to the current LRSP update process, now underway). This is not to argue that effective translation alone in the GVRD case could have prevented the conflict which eventually arose between goals for offices in RTCs and office proliferation in business parks. The issue of instability created additional barriers, which would have made translation of several issues difficult, if not impossible. This finding thus raises the issue of political timing (discussed in Chapter 2) and the need for effective translators to also possess timing skills. And, speaking more broadly, greater efforts within academic planning programmes to nurture the qualities which might ultimately assist with translation (over the longer term of students’ careers) would be beneficial.

**Summing Up**

This dissertation has provided case study research on the implementation of four successive GVRD MGM plans as they have impacted three Burnaby employment nodes. Its purpose was to better understand the relationships between communicative regionalism and actual MGM outcomes. In doing so, it made use of a three-part methodology, which included the application of an ANT lens to better examine the relationships and interactions of key government agencies during MGM plan development and implementation. The analysis suggests mixed results in terms of goal outcomes, and provides empirical evidence of recent
critiques which have been launched against communicative planning theory. I have used these empirical results to recommend either a substantial overhaul of communicative planning theory or its replacement with a new post-communicative paradigm. I have specifically recommended five areas of more concerted research to help in this regard. First, scholars and practitioners should continue to explore the link between power and action – including further understanding of the role of instrumental actions in both outcomes and the evolution of relationships. Second, the presence and degree of network instability may alternately create constraints or opportunities for MGM and other forms of planning. Third, there must be greater recognition of differentiated stakeholder needs for consultation, as well as place-specific receptivities to consultation short cuts. Fourth, more detailed work is needed to develop best practices for the information-sharing aspect of MGM planning, and its possible role in building or consolidating what Healey labels the “repertoires for action” which exist in a given policy setting. Finally, there is value in examining further the roles and skill sets of various translators within MGM and other types of planning exercise, as a means of enabling both better information exchange and of facilitating the ongoing involvement of relevant stakeholders throughout the plan implementation phase.


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Statistics Canada (2009b). Average hourly wages of employees by selected characteristics and profession, unadjusted data, by province. Downloaded April 11, 2009 from website: http://www40.statcan.gc.ca/l01/cst01/labr69a-eng.htm


dated December 8, 1999, to be presented at the December 13, 1999 Burnaby Council Meeting.


Appendix 1
University of British Columbia Ethical Review Approval Certificate
CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL- MINIMAL RISK RENEWAL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR:</th>
<th>DEPARTMENT:</th>
<th>UBC BREB NUMBER:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Penelope C. Gurstein</td>
<td>UBC/College for Interdisciplinary Studies/Community &amp; Regional Planning</td>
<td>H07-01425</td>
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INSTITUTION(S) WHERE RESEARCH WILL BE CARRIED OUT:

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<tr>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Site</th>
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<tr>
<td>UBC</td>
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<td>Vancouver (excludes UBC Hospital)</td>
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Other locations where the research will be conducted:
Municipal government offices (interviews with research subjects at their place of work); regional government offices; offices of selected politicians and local developers.

CO-INVESTIGATOR(S):
Laura Ellen Tate

SPONSORING AGENCIES:
N/A

PROJECT TITLE:
Planners: Pawns or Powers Behind the Metropolitan Throne? A Case Study of Employment Growth Management in Burnaby and the Greater Vancouver Regional District

EXPIRY DATE OF THIS APPROVAL: July 8, 2009

APPROVAL DATE: July 8, 2008

The Annual Renewal for Study have been reviewed and the procedures were found to be acceptable on ethical grounds for research involving human subjects.

Approval is issued on behalf of the Behavioural Research Ethics Board

Dr. M. Judith Lynam, Chair
Dr. Ken Craig, Chair
Dr. Jim Rupert, Associate Chair
Dr. Laurie Ford, Associate Chair
Dr. Daniel Salhani, Associate Chair
Dr. Anita Ho, Associate Chair
Appendix 2

Interview Questionnaires
Provincial Interview Template - Overview (handed out in advance to interviewees) and Detailed Questions (Regional Interviews were adapted from this template with ad hoc questions added during interview)

My research focuses on the ways in which municipally planning departments provide an integration point for various forces in the growth management process, and how their interactions with ‘spaces of discretion’ can provide for either holistic or compartmentalized implementation of metropolitan growth management strategies. In essence, I’m interested in the way relations between various actors in what I would call the “Metro Vancouver growth management network” have yielded tangible outcomes which are implemented at the municipal level. My specific case study, or the outcomes that I’m investigating, relate to the development of three employment nodes within the City of Burnaby with a major impact on the broader metropolitan growth strategy.

In taking this research focus, my analysis of the relations between network actors focuses on the texts which have been created by these actors. These texts include senior government legislation, such as the Municipal Act, Growth Strategies Act, and Local Government Act. They also include various regional plans and reports, as well as municipal plans. Moreover, they include more transitory texts which adjust municipal plans, such as rezoning and plan amendment reports.

My questions to provincial staff will address two dimensions of this analysis. The first dimension relates specifically to: provincial statutes; the changes to them which have impacted the growth management process; and the climate surrounding these changes. I will be asking questions about the rationale for these changes, how the changes were made (including whether there was consultation with local governments, or the consideration of existing local practices) and the provincial perceptions of their impacts. The second dimension relates to provincial perceptions of events and actions which were occurring at regional and local levels during this time.

Part One: Questions Relating to Provincial Statutes

Explanatory Note:

Some of these questions may address a time period when you were not working for the Ministry of Community Services or its predecessor ministries. Nonetheless, as all organizations have their own histories of past events which are passed down to subsequent generations of staff, you may have some information about these events. When this occurs, please indicate that you weren’t working for the Ministry at the time, but had heard “x” or “y” about the event. And if you know of a former colleague who was working there at the time, and who could be available for an interview, please advise accordingly.
Questions:

1. In 1965 the system of regional planning was adopted, and in 1971 the municipal Finance Authority Act was passed. These developments occurred under the populist and highly centralized leadership of WAC Bennett. How did this come about? How did staff and the Minister responsible make a case for these proposals? Or did the direction come first from Premier Bennett himself?

2. The decision in 1983 to remove regional land use planning powers struck some planners working in local government (even decades after the fact) as a highly political move. Who was the Minister responsible at the time? To what extent did he/she and MMA staff influence matters as this legislation was prepared, and what were things like after it was adopted?

3. In 1989 the Municipal Act was amended to explicitly allow some advisory-type planning and research to occur at the regional level. Can you tell me how this came about and why?

4. In 1995 the Growth Strategies Act was passed, which once again legitimized regional planning. Can you tell me how this came about? (probe)

5. Darlene Marzari (former Minister of Municipal Affairs) had a history as a community activist before her election to Parliament and assumption of the MMA position. What was it like working with her in bringing forward the Growth Strategies Act? To what extent did her leanings influence the shape/form of the legislation and the powers/constraints it assigned to local governments?

6. To what extent have practices in the GVRD/Metro Vancouver influenced the evolution of provincial legislation regarding growth strategies?

7. The Growth Strategies Act, (and its provisions which were later rolled into the Local Government Act) required that an intergovernmental advisory committee provide advice during the development of a RGS. To some extent, the IAC resembles the earlier technical advisory committee which had been mandated in pre-1983 versions of the Municipal Act. But it also seemed to provide for more explicit collaboration between local governments and provincial agencies. Could you comment on this, and explain what results were anticipated in mandating the IAC?
Part Two:
Perceptions of Regional and Local Events Relating to Case Study

1. What can you tell me about the Metrotown node within Burnaby, and the expectations for this node from a regional growth management perspective? Can you tell me about any other Ministries which had an influence on its development? (probe)

2. I’d like to turn to the industrial precinct known as the Big Bend Area. (Show map, photos). Do you know anything about the development of this area, and the role of provincial agencies like BC Hydro in selling lands in this area? (probe) Can you recommend the names of any other provincial staff who might be able to provide any information on this?

3. I’d like to discuss the area known as Discovery Park / Discovery Place, located near BCIT. From reviewing Hansard records, it appears that there were high expectations for development of this site to encourage high technology in the province. Can you comment on this? Do you have any information to add, or can you recommend the names of any other provincial staff who might be able to provide information on this?

4. What other thoughts or comments do you have on the evolution and implementation of the GVRD Livable Region Strategic Plan (not including the update now currently in process).
Burnaby Interviews - Detailed Questions

Part One:
Questions Relating to LRSP Implementation

Explanatory Note:

Some of these questions may address a time period when you were not working for the City of Burnaby. Nonetheless, as all organizations have their own histories of past events which are passed down to subsequent generations of staff, you may have some information about these events. When this occurs, please indicate that you weren’t working for Burnaby at the time, but had heard “x” or “y” about the event. And if you know of a former colleague who was working there at the time, and who could be available for an interview, please advise accordingly.

Questions:

1.  What role did Burnaby have in the 1996 LRSP? Were there significant negotiations and/or tradeoffs involved in trying to fulfill this role in terms of some of Burnaby’s other local planning aspirations?

2.  Can you tell me about Burnaby’s role in the 1976 Livable Region Plan, and how this might have differed from its role in 1996?

3.  What difference did the 1995 passing of the Growth Strategies Act make to Burnaby’s support for, and role in, the 1996 LRSP?

4.  What do you consider Burnaby’s greatest successes and disappointments in implementing the LRSP?

5.  How would you describe Burnaby’s relationship to the GVRD on LRSP implementation during the time that you worked there?

Part Two:
Actions taken by Burnaby to develop three specific employment nodes:
Metrotown, the Big Bend Area, and Discovery Place

6.  Tony Parr was the planning director for much of the period when important decisions were being made about Metrotown and the other growth nodes. Can you tell me more about him –his vision, working/ collaborative style? Also what can you tell me about the other key actors who helped him during this process, and who eventually assumed senior level positions in the department?
7. One important facet of the Metrotown development strategy was to attract public sector offices there. Who ended up coming? How did that come about, i.e., what active role, if any, did Burnaby play in this process?

8. What significant changes or developments happened in Metrotown after 1996 and especially after the 1998 adoption of Burnaby’s OCP and new regional context statement?

9. How would you comment on the office space and office-based employment in Metrotown, as compared to Burnaby’s and the GVRD’s expectations for this area?

10. Given the results achieved to date, do you think that the GVRD and all its member agencies had enough information about the office market, and its specific potential in the Vancouver Region when the initial direction was set to encourage office development in RTCs in 1976? In hind sight, could/should any different decisions have been made?

11. What do you consider to be Burnaby’s biggest successes related to Metrotown?

12. I’d like to turn to the industrial precinct known as the Big Bend Area. (Show map, photos). How would you describe its role in the GVRD’s Livable Region Strategic Plan?

13. I gather that this area has been slated for industry since at least 1972, and that at the time this proposal was fully supported by the regional plan at the time, as well as the subsequent 1976 Livable Region Plan. How has this area changed from the original 1970s vision for it –both in terms of Burnaby’s and the GVRD’s expectations for it?

14. Turning to the Glenlyon Business Park within Big Bend, what can you tell me about the role of the CNR and Canada Lands Corporation in developing it, and of the type of relationship existing between Burnaby and these agencies? Is there a contact person at Canada Lands who you could recommend as a contact for further perspective on that agency’s activities in the area?

15. Does Burnaby still own lands in the Big Bend area slated for industrial / office purposes?

16. Can you tell me more about the role of provincial agencies like BC Hydro in selling lands in this area? Can you recommend the names of any contacts at this agency who might be able to provide any information on this?

17. Can you tell me more about decisions to take a more liberal approach to office development in this area, which seemed to be the case starting in the 1990s?
18. What do you consider to be Burnaby’s biggest successes in the Big Bend Area?

19. I’d like to discuss the area known as Discovery Park / Discovery Place, located near BCIT. From reviewing Hansard records, it appears that there were high expectations for development of this site to encourage high technology in the province. Can you comment on this?

20. Prior to the Province declaring its intentions for Discovery Place, what was Burnaby’s vision for the area?

21. What was Burnaby’s relationship with the Province like during planning for this area?

22. What do you consider to be Burnaby’s biggest successes in the Discovery Place area?