

**GROWTH MANAGEMENT: PRESERVING LIVABILITY  
IN GREATER VANCOUVER**

by

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## ABSTRACT

The intent of this thesis is twofold. First, to investigate the feasibility of a comprehensive and integrated growth management approach to the complex, pervasive, and persistent growth issues threatening Greater Vancouver's livability. Second, to establish the parameters of a growth management strategy tailored to the needs and requirements of the Greater Vancouver region, and the supportive institutional conditions necessary for its effective and efficient implementation and operation.

These tasks were accomplished through a systematic review and analysis of: contemporary growth management theory; Canadian and American experiences with the application of this theory; the theoretical and administrative foundations of land-use planning; Greater Vancouver's growth issues and concerns, including past and current efforts to address these issues and concerns; and, Greater Vancouver's institutional environment, including systems of governance and organizational structures.

The thesis concludes that the development, implementation, and enduring support of a comprehensive, integrated growth management program can achieve the preservation of Greater Vancouver's livability. This is, however, contingent on the undertaking of several critical actions including: legislative enactment of a comprehensive and binding growth management program; restoration of regional planning powers; continued political and public support for regional growth management and, the development and support of an on-going public process designed to build consensus, educate, and generate feedback.



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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1. Problem Statement

Greater Vancouver is experiencing rapid population growth and, as a result, faces a number of related problems such as urban sprawl, traffic congestion, environmental degradation, and diminished livability. Current development trends and patterns combined with the lack of a comprehensive and integrated strategy to manage this growth further exacerbate the situation.

#### 1.2. Purpose

The purpose of this thesis is twofold. First, to determine if comprehensive, integrated and legislated growth management is an appropriate and effective policy vehicle to achieve the long-term preservation of Greater Vancouver's livability. Second, to formulate a growth management strategy tailored to the conditions and realities of Greater Vancouver, including the required components of a successful, goal-achieving growth management model.

#### 1.3. Methodology

This thesis is the result of the review, synthesis and analysis of current literature pertaining to the theoretical foundations of growth management, preservation of Greater

Vancouver's livability, land-use planning, and regional governance.

This is a joint thesis which builds on and enhances research undertaken for Alan F. J. Artibise as part of course requirements for Planning 526 - Public Policy at the University of British Columbia's School of Community and Regional Planning. Many of the concepts and ideas of this thesis were derived from an unpublished paper entitled "The Washington State Growth Management Act - Applicability to British Columbia's Lower Mainland," prepared by the authors in conjunction with Steve Patrinick and Geoff Deverteuille.

#### 1.4. Thesis Outline

The thesis is divided into three sections. In Section I, growth management theory is examined and a case is built for legislated growth management as an appropriate tool to preserve livability in Greater Vancouver. This section includes a discussion of growth management theory, growth pressures in the Lower Mainland, and the inappropriateness of the current system of regional governance in tackling this growth. Section II forges a growth management strategy for Greater Vancouver which is tailored to regional needs and resources. To assist in the formulation of such a strategy, growth management efforts in the United States and Canada are examined in detail. Further, a detailed investigation of the growth management efforts currently underway in the Greater Vancouver Regional District is provided. Section III contains final conclusions and recommendations.



## **SECTION I**

### **MAKING A CASE FOR GROWTH MANAGEMENT IN GREATER VANCOUVER**

## CHAPTER 2

### INTRODUCTION - SECTION I

#### 2.1. Making a Case for Growth Management in Greater Vancouver

Growth management is a comprehensive planning approach intended to create and maintain livable communities and regions. The purpose of this section is to investigate this new approach to land-use planning and to gauge its appropriateness as a means of preserving livability in Greater Vancouver. This task requires an understanding of growth management theory, knowledge of the opportunities and constraints associated with growth management as public policy, and finally, an understanding of the system of regional governance, currently in place throughout the region. The principal objectives the chapters contained within this section are outlined below.

The section begins with an overview of growth management theory. Chapter 3, entitled GROWTH MANAGEMENT: THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK, investigates the evolution of this latest manifestation of planning, outlines fundamental goals and objectives, and investigates the characteristics and structure of various growth management strategies. Finally, the chapter provides an overview of the problems and criticisms of growth management strategies which have been introduced in other jurisdictions.

Due to its comprehensive nature, multi-jurisdictional requirements, long-term scope, and the need to address issues which are not readily quantifiable, the implementation of growth management policy emerges as a significant barrier to effective policy action and

the achievement of goals and objectives. Chapter 4 - LINKING POLICY TO ACTION - provides a framework for discussion on the development and implementation of growth management policies which are developed in subsequent chapters. In essence, this chapter investigates how policies are translated into effective actions. The analysis is intended to provide an understanding of the fundamental principles and determinants associated with the policy process. To achieve this, the substance and nature of public policy is first reviewed. Second, an overview of the typical cycle through which policies must travel is provided. Finally, this chapter focuses on the process of policy implementation. This includes a review of the barriers to effective policy implementation. Of particular relevance to growth management is a discussion on the types of policy structures which are available..

Is growth management an appropriate mechanism to preserve livability in Greater Vancouver? Is the present system of regional governance equipped to provide the framework for a growth management strategy? Chapter 5, entitled MAKING A CASE FOR GROWTH MANAGEMENT IN GREATER VANCOUVER answers these questions by assessing growth pressures evident in Greater Vancouver and identifies the areas where their effects are most prevalent. A comprehensive review of the governance and planning systems evident in the region is provided in order to assess their suitability for the management of this growth. Finally, this chapter addresses the question - is coordinated and integrated regional planning in the form of legislated growth management an effective and appropriate means to manage population growth and preserve livability in the region?

A summary of the findings resulting from the research undertaken in this section is contained within Chapter 6 - CONCLUSION - SECTION I.

## CHAPTER 3

### GROWTH MANAGEMENT: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

#### 3.1. Introduction

This chapter examines the evolution of growth management from the first experiences in the 1970s to the present. Included is an analysis of the changing rationale associated with the introduction of various forms of legislation. The emphasis in this chapter is placed on the American experience. The fundamental goals and objectives associated with the latest generation are articulated including an overview of the tools and organizational principles associated with these growth management systems. The characteristics (growth restrictive ↔ growth accommodating) and structure ( top-down ↔ bottom-up) of growth strategies are also discussed. Finally, a critical review of formalized growth management systems from philosophical, theoretical, and practical perspectives is provided.

#### 3.2. Growth Management Defined

Land policy, in the context of growth management, is intended as an alternative to market-driven land-use choices which often produce negative environmental, social and economic consequences. Growth management evolved in response to these problems in the form of a comprehensive approach to land-use, transportation and economic development planning.

In the context of urban and regional studies, growth is simply the expansion and intensification of developed space. The results of growth, generally caused by increases in population and economic prosperity, are increased demands for housing, services, schools etc.. Unmanaged growth can and has led to the exploitation of land and natural resources. The concept of growth management - the intelligent use of land and other resources - is not new to municipal planners and administrators. Recently, however, the goals of growth management have been increasingly articulated in terms of quality of life: affordable housing, economic revitalization, environmental protection, etc..

A working definition of growth management is difficult to establish due to the complexity of variables involved. Perhaps the following two definitions best articulate the most recent growth management efforts:

A conscious government program intended to influence the rate, amount, type, and/or quality of future development within a local jurisdiction. Growth management programs may include a statement of growth policy, a development plan, and various traditional and innovative implementation tools, regulations, administrative devices, taxation schemes, public investment programs, and land acquisition techniques (Godscalk et al. 1977, 8); and

Growth management seeks to maintain an ongoing equilibrium between development and conservation, between various forms of development and the concurrent provision of infrastructure, between the demands for public services generated by growth and the supply of revenues to finance those demands, and between progress and equity (Chinitz 1990, 6).

Regardless of the complexity of formulating a working definition, it is imperative to realize that the growth management process is both active and dynamic - as opposed to other forms of land-use regulation such as zoning which are passive and static (Chinitz 1990, 6). In this context, growth management is an effort by government to "guide the timing, location, and quality of growth in order to achieve the planning goals of a community" (Pivo 1988, 1).

### 3.3. History of Growth Management

Growth management is the latest and most comprehensive attempt by urban and regional planners to determine, and bring to life, an ideal urban form which best meets the needs of people by managing the finite spaces where they live and work. To understand how and why the growth management concept has evolved requires some understanding of the changing nature of the North American city.

North American cities remained core-oriented into the 1920s despite the advent of mass transit technology such as the railway, street car, and subway. There were signs that this centralization of manufacturing, retailing and related services would soon change as reform movements related to housing and city beautification unfolded. Overcrowded slums and congestion were tackled with housing policies designed to promote centralized commercial redevelopment and slum demolition.

The postwar era saw accelerated suburbanization of North American cities. Low-density suburban development was fed by nearly universal car ownership (a result of rising personal incomes) and the construction of the interstate highway system.

A massive exodus of industrial and business activity, a result of suburbanization, served to erode the tax base of municipalities and by the 1970s many local governments were experiencing a severe fiscal crisis. This low-density suburban development became associated with the term urban sprawl. Gradually, people became concerned with the environmental and fiscal effects of new growth, which had become associated with urban sprawl, and central cities and suburban localities became advocates of compact development (Audirac, Shermyen, and Smith 1990).

A growth-versus-no-growth (or compact versus sprawl) debate had now reached a

pinnacle. The publication of *The Costs of Sprawl* (Real Estate Research Corporation 1974), a landmark research document which proposed that high density development had lower fiscal, energy, and environmental costs than low density sprawl, only served to heat this debate. This document, although widely challenged, would establish a planning and public policy framework for the next decade.

The first wave of growth management initiatives, which began in the 1970s, were noticeably different from the spurt of land-use regulation which came out of the late 1960s. The growth management legislation and policy of this era was based primarily on environmental considerations, corresponding to the *Federal Clean Air Act* and *Clean Water Act* of the early 1970s.

For the first time urban growth was viewed by a growing number of citizens as undesirable. During this period, Florida, Oregon and California experienced unprecedented population growth and resultant land development. People noticed a marked reduction in their quality of life and witnessed extensive environmental degradation. For example, the State of California saw the development of nearly all of its 1,100 mile coastline. Here, the impetus for growth management, spearheaded by the Sierra Club, was concern over air and water pollution along this once pristine coastline. Although Florida and Oregon passed enabling legislation establishing growth management policies in 1972 and 1973, the end result at the local level being ordinances designed to halt or strictly limit population growth. Oregon's approach was the most comprehensive in relation to current growth management legislation.

The second wave of growth management occurred during the early and mid-1980s. The growth / no growth debate had now been firmly displaced by the compact versus

sprawl development debate. Legislation was introduced in several states including Florida, New Jersey, Vermont, Rhode Island, Maine and Georgia to establish statewide growth management systems. The second wave of growth management arose from a much broader set of concerns than the first wave of the 1970s. People found their quality of life being eroded by leap frog development, sprawl, incursion of development onto agricultural and environmentally sensitive lands, the lack of affordable housing, and the lack of adequate infrastructure. Public discontent forced politicians and planners to acknowledge the linkages between environmental, housing, transportation, and land-use issues.

This comprehensive and integrated approach which evolved in the 1980s was designed to address quality of life issues and was considerably different from the fragmented, regulatory planning process emerging from the 1970s (excluding Oregon). A principal feature of growth management efforts in the 1980s was the integration of local planning and land-use decisions into a single system guided by state goals and standards (whereas earlier efforts had followed a stringent top - down approach). Programs in this bottom-up approach were designed to encourage, financially support and integrate comprehensive planning at the state, local and regional levels. This transition to an integrated approach was further stimulated by the realization among citizens, elected officials and planners that environmental problems do not respect nor adhere to artificial boundaries.

This second wave is still in progress today as states which had previously passed legislation in the 1980s are beginning to implement their plans while other states are joining them with new legislation.

Some of the most notable (second wave) efforts are taking place in Florida (*State*



*Comprehensive Plan* - 1985), Georgia (*Coordinated Planning Legislation* - 1989), and New Jersey (*State Planning Act* - 1986).

#### 3.4. Growth Management Goals and Objectives

The goals and objectives of growth management arose from a variety of needs and circumstances in the states establishing systems in the 1970s and 1980s. The strategies, procedures, and administrative structures vary considerably among the individual systems, however, the goals remain remarkably similar.

In general, the state growth management systems seek an integrated network of local comprehensive plans that will guide local zoning, permitting, and capital improvement decisions. Local plans are required or encouraged with strong incentives to follow a state plan or set of goals and guidelines. (Southwestern Pennsylvania Regional Planning Commission 1990, 3)

The goals of growth management encompass a broad range of social, environmental, and economic considerations that pertain to the management and control of uncoordinated and unplanned growth. Growth management is not a mechanism to stop or hinder growth. Rather, it seeks to accommodate full growth (in most cases) while protecting the environment and providing adequate infrastructure in a timely and fiscally responsible manner. It is intended to provide citizens, communities, local government, and the private sector with a common direction in future planning initiatives. The overriding intent of growth management is to protect and enhance quality of life. From this perspective, a number of generic goals arise, including:

1. Ensuring that infrastructure capacity expands to meet the needs of new

development;

2. Containing development within defined areas;
3. Protecting open, agricultural and environmentally sensitive lands;
3. Providing affordable housing;
5. Protecting the character and integrity of local communities; and
6. Revitalizing economically depressed areas.

### 3.5. Growth Management Tools

Growth management is operationalized through the introduction of a variety of tools and regulations which are designed to suspend or intervene in the free market by redirecting growth and development in order to preserve the natural environment and create more liveable urban centres. The tools common to most modern growth management systems are: large-lot rural zoning; urban growth boundaries (non-monetary contributions); concurrency requirements; housing density and affordability targets; concentration of employment in major centres; penalization of auto use and subsidization of public transit; developer impact fees and exactions; infill and density requirements; and environmental and building regulation (Morrill and Hodge 1991, 26). The intent of each of these are summarized in Table 3.1.

| <p align="center"><b>Table 3.1.</b><br/><b>Growth Management Tools</b></p> |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Tool</b>  | <b>Intent</b>  |
| Large-lot rural zoning   | To preserve open space and rural activities without adverse effects on housing costs.  |
| Urban growth boundaries  | To accommodate long term needs for affordable housing within the boundary and preserve open space and rural economies outside.   |
| Concurrency Requirements   | To ensure that adequate infrastructure matches requirements demand.  |
| Housing density and affordability targets                                  | To ensure an adequate and varied supply of affordable housing.   |
| Concentration of employment in major centres                               | To provide opportunities for a jobs / housing balance in urban communities.  |
| Penalization of auto use and subsidization of public transit               | To encourage the use of public transit, encourage higher densities, and reduce urban sprawl.   |
| Developer impact fees and exactions  | To ensure that the full costs of new development are borne by developers.  |
| Infill and density requirements  | To reduce the cost of providing buildings, services and infrastructure, and preserve open space by maximizing the development potential of existing built-up areas.                          |
| Environmental and building regulation                                      | To prevent construction on or near shorelines, wetlands, steep slopes; to prevent the removal of various classes of vegetation; to alter scenic vistas; or to alter the topography of sites. |

Source: Morrill and Hodge 1991, 26

### 3.6. Growth Management Organizational Principles

Growth management systems or plans are formulated on a number of organizational principles. Systems normally address the following elements: state guidelines; local

planning; county and/or regional planning; local plan implementation; integration of state, regional, and local plans; participation of state agencies; state funding; and mechanisms for implementation. Each of these organizational principles is briefly explained below.

#### *3.6.1. State Guidelines*

The goals of growth management were outlined in section 3.4. Goals and objectives must be formulated within each system based upon careful consideration of the needs at hand. To achieve their particular growth management goals, governments have either specified guidelines for action in their growth management laws or mandated a state plan to provide such guidelines. In other words, guidelines provide the framework for planning. These guidelines often come in the form of specific standards, suggested policies or requirements for state agencies and local governments to follow. The state also establishes the roles and responsibilities of regulatory entities.

#### *3.6.2. Local Planning*

Nearly all growth management systems require local governments to create a comprehensive plan and submit it to the state for approval. Although management plans are statewide initiatives, the real battle to control growth occurs at the local level. This organizational principle is truly at the heart of any successful system.

Mandated elements of local comprehensive plans often include: land allocation requirements for commercial/industrial; affordable housing; regional facilities; transportation; public facilities; the development and provision of urban services; and, the use of "fair-share" formulas for regionally beneficial growth.

There are several methods of encouraging cooperation or forcing compliance in this area such as: imposing a comprehensive plan on any local government not in compliance by a specified deadline; withholding excise tax revenues from uncooperative local governments; directing state funds for housing, infrastructure/economic development for local governments submitting a comprehensive plan compliant with state guidelines; nullifying any existing land-use ordinances where local governments fail to meet guidelines; and, authorizing impact fees only for local governments with approved plans.

### *3.6.3. County and/or Regional Planning*

Although some states have no regional structures, regional planning is a key component of most state growth management systems. The extent to which the region links state and local planning interests varies significantly in each growth management experience. In some cases, regional planning councils acquired greater responsibility and increased state funding as a direct result of growth legislation. Most systems require that regional institutions provide technical and other assistance to local governments since many local governments lack the resources to conduct detailed technical analyses. A progressive growth management system typically charges the regional body to prepare a comprehensive regional plan, a compilation of local comprehensive plans, and to ensure consistency and compatibility of these local plans.

### *3.6.4. Local Plan Implementation*

The implementation of comprehensive plans is achieved through the use of zoning and other development-related ordinances and the adoption of capital improvement plans,

normally required within a specified time period. Most systems also require a periodic review and revision of local plans and ordinances.

#### 3.6.5. *Integration of State, Regional, and Local Plans*

An effective growth management system is comprehensive and integrated in three ways:

1. *Geographically.* Across all governments of the same level throughout the state;
2. *Vertically.* Across all different levels of government in the state; and
3. *Across issues.* Such as environmental protection, housing, transportation, and economic development.

This ensures that local plans do not conflict, regional plans are compatible with local plans (and vice-versa), and local plans follow the state plan.

Most states review and approve local plans at the state level as well as required plans from regions, counties and/or state agencies. The framework adopted by each state establishes the policies and institutional relationships of the growth management system. There are a range of intergovernmental approaches. As outlined in Table 3.2, the intergovernmental structure of growth strategies can range from centralized to local (or decentralized). Another way to characterize this range of structures is to place them on a spectrum from top-down to bottom-up approaches, with the centralized approach being most top-down in nature.

| <p><b>Table 3.2.</b><br/><b>Intergovernmental Structure of State Growth Strategies</b></p> |   |
|--|---|
| <b>State-Local Relationship</b>  | <b>Indicator</b>  |
| Most centralized   | Outright state / regional preemption of local authority common for developments deemed of more-than-local importance. |
| Partially centralized  | State / regional preemption of local authority by appeal only.  |
| Collaborative (strong)   | Local implementation of state / regional goals and standards (consistency required).                                  |
| Collaborative (weak)   | Local implementation of state / regional goals and standards (consistency encouraged).                                |
| Growth control localism  | No effective link between state / regional goals and standards and local decisions / plans.                           |

Source: Bollens 1991, Table 3.

Each approach has its advocates. Proponents of a centralized approach argue that higher levels of government must have additional powers and control over growth management. The state must set the agenda to ensure success of any system. Proponents of a bottom-up strategy, on the other hand, argue that local governments must be involved with counties and regions in setting policy guidelines since they are charged with administering the system and thus determining its success.

#### 3.6.6. *Participation of State Agencies*

Successful growth management systems recognize that state agencies must conform to state policies and objectives. This conformance is obtained through a variety of

measures ranging from the requirement of plans and documents which demonstrate adherence to the goals to a more passive approach. State agencies also play a crucial role in growth management through the funding of capital improvement functions. This funding can serve to support growth management projects as well as encourage participation of local governments.

#### 3.6.7. *State Funding*

All growth management states have allocated new funds for planning. Effective growth management requires sophistication in planning at the local level - a degree of sophistication beyond the means of most local governments. For this reason, state funds are required to implement growth management laws. In addition, some programs allocate additional funds for housing, infrastructure, and land conservation.

#### 3.6.8. *Mechanisms for Implementation*

Problems with the implementation of growth management often arise due to difficulties in understanding the complexity of interlocking issues and maintaining public support for a lengthy process that yields few short term results and can be extremely costly. Nevertheless, several mechanisms can be employed, most of which have been briefly described above, to support the process, ensure compliance with strategies, and reduce institutional resistance to change:

1. *Impact Fees.* Help local governments pay for the infrastructure that expands as growth occurs;
2. *Transfer of Development Rights (TDRs).* Facilitates increased zoning for



conservation by allowing the owners of open land to receive compensation for their lands development potential without actually developing it;

3. *Benefit-Sharing Mechanisms.* Such as tax base sharing can reduce the competition between municipalities and promote long-range, regional objectives;
3. *State Funded Capital Improvements.* Improve growth management planning; and
5. *Coordinated Development Review Process.* A coordinated process for review and approval of permits for development. Streamlines the permitting process, makes it more consistent and efficient, and minimizes development conflicts (Southwestern Pennsylvania Regional Planning Commission 1990, 3-11).

#### 3.6.9. *System Overview*

While most progressive growth management systems encourage and attempt to accommodate full growth rather than restrict it, the degree to which this is accomplished depends on stated goals and objectives. Growth management goals, guidelines and standards utilized in any particular system place it on a growth-restrictive ↔ growth accommodating spectrum, with most systems leaning decidedly towards growth accommodating. Table 3.3 displays the growth management goals, tools, and organizational principles described in earlier sections on this spectrum.

| <b>Table 3.3.</b><br><b>Characteristics of State Growth Strategy Types</b>                                 |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Growth Restrictive</b>  | <b>Growth Accommodating</b>  |
| Goals and standards focus on environmental protection  | Goals and standards affirmative regarding appropriate growth.  |
| State / regional double veto regulatory approach only  | Regulatory and growth allocation planning approaches used.   |
| No state / regional review and comment procedure for locally unwanted projects                             | Formalized state / regional review of locally unwanted land-uses (LULUs). <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advisory opinion only.</li> <li>• Appeals Process with binding override of local denials.</li> </ul>  |
| Negative state / regional preemptive environmental controls.   | Affirmative state / regional controls regarding LULUs.   |
| No local planning requirements to accommodate regionally beneficial growth.                                | Mandated elements of local comprehensive plans: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Land Allocation requirements for commercial / industrial, affordable housing, regional facilities.</li> <li>• Use of "fair-share" formulas for regionally beneficial growth.</li> </ul> |
| Compact growth strategies do not include growth allowances and incentives.                                 | Compact growth strategies include growth allowances and incentives.  |
| No systematic advance planning and identification by nonlocal government of sites for regional facilities. | Advance planning and site identification done and used in review of local decisions and plans.   |
| "Concurrency" requirement with adequate state funding of infrastructure.                                   | "Concurrency" requirement with adequate state funding or contingent on same.   |
| Non-local siting statutes allow local veto.  | Siting statutes allow provision of incentives to local "hosts" or preemption of local authority.   |

Source: Bollens 1991, Table 2.

Based on the mixture of goals, tools, and organizational principles employed, legislated growth management systems can be further categorized as follows: state dominant; state-regional local; bottom-up; and hybrid. These categories are reviewed below:

1. *State Dominant (Top-Down)*. The state establishes standards and criteria by which lower levels of government prepare plans and submit for review. The state is empowered to impose strong sanctions on non-complying jurisdictions. This model leaves little room for discretionary judgement by regional or local planning bodies;
2. *State-Regional-Local*. The state has less of a decisive role and its powers are limited to plan review and comment. The regional authority has powers to enforce moderate consistency standards;
3. *Bottom-Up*. Local and county comprehensive plans are not mandated. Planning ascends cumulatively from lower to higher levels of government with considerable discretion left to negotiate between local and regional bodies; and
4. *Hybrid*. Local and county comprehensive plans are mandated for rapidly growing areas. The model structure is based on 1-3 above.

### 3.7. Critique of Growth Management

The growth management bandwagon has managed to recruit supporters from all walks of life including academics, elected officials, the private sector, and individual citizens. However, here are a substantial number of those who vehemently oppose and type

of growth controls and propose that the concept of growth management is based on an utopian ideal centring on the desirability and feasibility of compact urban forms.

Direct criticisms of growth management focus on a broad range of unsubstantiated issues but can be reduced to the following categories:

1. *Conflicting Goals.* Growth management goals are often considered to be contradictory (by opponents and proponents alike). For example, containing growth within established urban areas while maintaining the character and integrity of existing neighbourhoods is a seemingly impossible task, yet this is precisely what growth controls often specify;
2. *Elitist Planning.* Critics of growth management contend that it is simply central planning for the benefit of the elite. The controlling group in society establishes and implements policies which benefit the elite to the detriment of the poor who are faced with decreased housing alternatives and a lower standard of living. It is often argued that the support for growth management stems really from its appeal to the status quo rather than environmental protection. That it is really a set of tools to slow or prevent growth and thus preserve communities and prevent change (Morrill 1991);
3. *Land Markets.* An elaborate regulatory system of zoning ordinances, subdivision regulations, and building codes were established to intervene in the marketplace and to guide the use, density and design of development of land long before the advent of growth management. Critics of growth management contend that further intervention into the marketplace is a mistake and that the imposition of growth controls, especially urban growth

boundaries (UGBs), dramatically alter the normal operation of urban and exurban land markets (Brueckner 1990; Chinitiz 1990; DeGrove 1984; Pollakowski and Wacter 1990). UGBs first constrain the land market by limiting the amount of land available for urban development. This artificially increases the value of land within the boundary and correspondingly decreases the value outside. Higher land prices within the UGB reduce the supply of available housing and thus make housing less affordable;

4. *Housing Affordability.* Growth controls tend to increase housing prices by constraining the supply of developable land. Empirical evidence exists to suggest that urban growth boundaries, the imposition of stringent environmental regulations, and development impact fees all contribute to increased housing prices (Fischel 1990); and
5. *Urban Form.* Compact development policies, a building block of growth management which encourage compactness through centralization, contiguity of development, and higher densities, are derived from fiscal, aesthetic, and environmental arguments against urban sprawl. However, the notion that sprawl is costly remains contentious and unresolved. Little empirical evidence exists to support the tenet that compact urban growth is fiscally efficient in providing urban services and infrastructure or that it maintains or enhances quality of life.

Environmental critics of growth management argue that accommodating population growth more compactly may harm the environment more than current low-density development patterns as a result of storm water runoff and the like. They contend that

sprawl may be more efficient and may even reduce congestion, commuting times, and distances.

Suburbanization has and still represents the dominant choice of land-use in the North American marketplace. It is still the dream of most North Americans to own a safe and sizeable home in the suburbs. Although little research has been done since the 1980s, there is little doubt that low-density suburban patterns are still the residential preference. Some of the reasons for this preference include the dream of owning a home, raising a family in a safe environment, the desire for privacy, and the desire for a rural or semi-rural setting.

Finally, opponents of growth management often target other issues such as the perceived failure of concurrency and the historical lack of success in decentralizing economic activity to depressed areas in American cities and regions.

### 3.8 Summary

Growth management is a strategy designed to guide the timing, location, and quality of growth in order to achieve the planning goals of local, regional, and national governments. It is intended largely to reduce the perceived environmental and economic effects of urban sprawl by creating enjoyable and livable high-density urban areas surrounded by green space and linked by efficient public transit systems.

Growth management arose in American states primarily as a response to a broad range of social, economic, and environmental concerns such as the disappearance of agricultural land, uneven economic development, traffic congestion and unplanned development. Land-use regulation of the 1960s was replaced by growth management legislation in the 1970s designed and implemented for the purpose of environmental

protection. A second wave of legislation came about in the 1980s which was much more comprehensive in nature and addressed broader quality of life issues. Many of the systems coming out of the latter era are just now being implemented.

The goals of growth management have evolved over the years from environmental regulation to, most recently, the maintenance and protection of quality of life. Specifically, recent growth management goals address issues such as environmental protection, affordable housing, containment of urban sprawl, transportation, and economic revitalization.

There are several growth management tools common to most current systems including: large-lot rural zoning; urban growth boundaries; concurrency requirements; housing density and affordability targets; concentration of employment in major centres, penalization of auto use and subsidy of public transit; developer impact fees and exaction; infill and density requirements; and environmental and building regulation.

The fundamental organizational principles associated with most growth management systems include: state guidelines; local planning; county and/or regional planning; local plan implementation; integration of state, regional, and local plans; participation of state agencies; state funding; and mechanisms for implementation. Growth management systems exist on growth restrictive ↔ growth accommodating spectrum, with most leaning towards the latter. Growth systems can also be placed on a top-down ↔ bottom-up spectrum.

Opponents of growth management argue that it is based on a utopian vision which describes the ideal city as one with a dense urban core serviced by rapid transit to urbanized outlying areas which are surrounded by green space. Land-use patterns have shaped the North American landscape the way they have because people want it this way

and it is more suited to the economic realities of the contemporary city. Commonly targeted areas for the criticism of growth management include: conflicting goals; elitist planning; land markets; housing affordability; and urban form.



## CHAPTER 4

### LINKING POLICY TO ACTION

#### 4.1. Introduction

Successful, goal-achieving public policy is the key medium in enacting positive change and addressing public issues and concerns. The development of effective public policy requires an understanding of the fundamental principles and determinants associated with the policy process. This chapter addresses the substance of public policy with its primary focus being the process of policy implementation, the factors affecting that process, and its relationship to policy formulation and change. This chapter is intended to explore the relationship between policy and action and to provide a framework for discussion on the development and implementation of growth management programs and policies which are developed in subsequent chapters.

#### 4.2. The Nature of Public Policy

Public policy may be defined as "the implicit or explicit intentions of government and the expression of those intentions entailing specific patterns of inaction by governmental agencies" (Barrett and Fudge 1981, v). It may be implemented through and directed at a wide variety of individuals and organizations, and follows a cycle which may be influenced by a number of variables.

From a public policy perspective, it is important to understand the issue-policy

transformation process. A public issue emerges "when a problem captures the attention of a sizable segment of the public and becomes an identifiable public issue" (Waste 1989, 33).

An issue enters into public debate only when it develops sufficient momentum to be of concern to average residents. It is only at this juncture that it is placed on the public agenda. This often occurs when some sort of triggering device forces people and their elected representatives to stand up and take notice. In terms of growth management policy, for example, severely congested freeways and ever increasing commuting times are often the triggering devices which cause citizens to back the commitment of public resources necessary to address the problem.

An issue may have enough critical mass to emerge temporarily on the public agenda but later fade if the triggering devices lose significance. Similarly, and not all issues successfully complete the policy cycle once they have started. Many issues never become true policy proposals and many proposals are never enacted into public policy. This is dependent upon the degree of urgency associated with the issue. "The time involved for the problem to ripen into a bona fide public issue depends on the type of community in which it arises, the way in which the condition/problem is viewed by that community, the presence or absence of skilled policy entrepreneurs, and the leadership or problem-solving style of the chief policy figures" (Ibid., 34). This is always a potential problem with the enactment and implementation of growth management policy since the benefits are not always quantifiable and are often not apparent to the general public in the short run.

#### 4.3. The Policy Cycle

Changes in public policy come about only after problems travel through a number of

stages known as the policy cycle. The policy cycle refers to the process or circuit through which problems must follow in order to become issues, which are then transformed into policies which may eventually be enacted and implemented. The policy-making process or cycle is affected by a number of variables and is subject to significant influences which may trigger, contain, delay, or cause modifications.

Many policy theorists have attempted to dissect, categorize, and simplify the policy life cycle. Perhaps the most pragmatic of the models developed on this subject is the Policy Life Cycle (Waste 1989, 29-47).

This model, which is tailored to the level of local government, contends that each policy has a "life cycle" which runs from recognition of an issue as a problem to enactment, implementation and ultimately termination of a policy. Thus, in the context of the life cycle, a policy has a birth and a death. This model outlines the process of how problems are identified, formulated and transformed into issues and later placed on the public agenda when a decision is made that government action is required. Policy formulation involves the identification of goals and objectives, development of a proposal to address the problem, and a decision on who will participate and how. This policy proposal is, in effect, a strategy designed to attain the objectives which have been placed on the public agenda. An important element of the life cycle model are feedback loops which "may include evaluation, termination, renewed attempts at implementation, or may recycle into the policy formulation, issue or problem stages of the policy life cycle" (Ibid., 36-39).

The policy environment is laden with many "environmental elements" which affect the policy life cycle - many of which have the ability to derail a policy and obstruct it from achieving its goal or enacting desired change. The ultimate success of a policy is therefore

dependent on the impact of external conditions and whether or not the policy is able to complete its entire life cycle (stages cannot be missed). Unimpeded movement through a life cycle is uncommon due to the number of barriers found in the policy environment. A policy may "die" at any point during its life cycle if it is ineffective or flawed, or if external conditions change that adversely affect the policy. In other instances, these sorts of events may lead to the reformulation of the policy so that it "re-lives" a portion or all of its life cycle.

Of particular relevance to discussions of growth management policy is the issue of implementation. Growth management policy represents a challenge to policy makers due to its comprehensive nature and the necessity to recognize the interrelations of various policies. Government policy, whether from the national, regional or local level, often falls short of original aspirations. Government is either unable to put its policy into effect as intended or discovers unexpected or unproductive outcomes. The difficulty in identifying clear objectives and priorities for action against a background of changing political, social and economic circumstances combine to produce an environment of uncertainty. Much of the existing literature on policy implementation tends to take a policy-centred or top-down view of the process. Such an approach treats implementers as agents for policy makers and tends to play down issues such as power relations, conflicting interests, and value systems between individuals and agencies responsible for making policy and those responsible for taking action. The issues associated with policy implementation are discussed in greater detail in the ensuing section.

#### 4.4. Implementation of Public Policy

Barrett and Fudge (1981, 11) offer a working definition of implementation which serves as a useful starting point in the discussion of the implementation process, its objectives, failings and shortcomings. It reads as "the process of successive refinement and translation of policy into specific procedures and tasks directed at putting policy intentions into effect." The essence of this particular definition is found in two underlying assumptions. First, implementation is a series of logical steps that follows the distinct activity of policy creation. Second, implementation is "a process of putting policy into effect, mainly concerned with coordinating and managing the various elements required to achieve the desired ends" (Ibid., 10). The essential element of this definition is the "putting policy intentions into effect" phrase since the sole purpose of implementation is translating a policy into an effective action that achieves desired results. Successful implementation is dependent on the following:

1. Knowing what you want to do;
2. The availability of the required resources;
3. The ability to marshall and control these resources to achieve the desired end; and
4. If others are to carry out the tasks, communicating what is wanted and controlling their performance (Ibid., 13).

Although this checklist appears simple and straightforward it is at the point of putting policy intentions into effect that implementation, and indeed, the broader policy-making process, most often fails.

Barrett and Fudge (1981) describe this failure as the "implementation gap." There

are many explanations of the origins and causes of the implementation gap. A common explanation is the reliance on the rational policy-making model, where implementation, as well as the entire policy-making process, is perceived as rational, straight-forward, and where all outcomes are expected. The rational model is often referred to as a "top-down" approach because of the systematic manner in which each step is taken and the explicit ordering that the steps are to be taken (Clove 1987). Implementation is regarded as just one of a series of steps that comprise the rational policy-making process. It is as pivotal to the entire process as other steps such as policy formulation or policy evaluation, however, because it is one of the latter steps in the process, it is influenced by decisions and actions that have previously been made in the policy-making chain.

Within the context of the rational model, it is assumed that policy, once it has been developed, will be implemented and results will closely resemble initial expectations. Should unexpected results materialize, it is not the "inherent" logic of the systematic, rational process that is questioned, but rather the technical elements of the implementation process.

In reality, however, the implementation and policy-making processes are neither straight-forward nor rational. In fact, the exact opposite situation prevails so that each process is susceptible to failure as a result of numerous determinants found in the policy-making environment. Cloke (1987, 29) has categorized these barriers into four broad problems areas:

1. *Inter-Organizational Conflicts.* Policy implementors have no direct control or influence over other resource-allocating agencies;
2. *Lack of Finance.* Policy implementors have no direct access to necessary

funds;

3. *Lack of Control Over Private-Sector Interests.* Private-sector interests and investments may not correspond with policy goal, and may in fact be in direct conflict; and
4. *Government Policies.* Policy implementors may not have necessary enabling legislation or may lack necessary statutory support.

Tindal and Tindal (1990) suggest that there are additional constraints on the implementation process that ultimately determine its successfulness as well as that of the entire policy-making process. Many of these constraints, or influences, can be categorized into three broad groupings: structural limitations; the changing socio-economic context; and, the power and influence of non-elected interests. At the level of local government, structural limitations allude to the lack of legislative authority that municipalities contend with when attempting to implement policies that are in their interests. Often required powers reside with higher levels of government and are beyond their immediate reach. In addition, the internal structure and operations of government can affect their ability to implement. For example, the lack of strong political leadership or executive direction, the failure to undertake long range planning or to establish goals and objectives, or finally, a lack of responsibility or accountability on the part of politicians are all factors which affect implementation..

The socio-economic context of implementation alluded to by Tindal and Tindal (1990) refers to the numerous external influences that affect policy and implementation. These may range from changing demographics, thereby resulting in different public needs

and expectations, to the impact on policy-making that the performance of economy<sup>1</sup>, to the influence that developers and the business community in general have on policy-making.

The third category of influencing factors, the power and influence of non-elected interests, refers to parties outside the political sphere that wield sufficient power to influence the decision-making process. In some cases these parties are business elites that have a particular agenda that they espouse. In other instances, the elites may be in fact from the political world and represent public officials that similarly pursue a particular agenda. Finally, individuals from within the political bureaucracy can pursue their own agendas (Tindal and Tindal 1990). The bottom line is that the concentration of power outside formal institutions and which promote singular agendas, represent opportunities to affect, or even alter, the implementation process.

Another contributing factor to the implementation gap arises from adherence to a widespread philosophy of organizational structures which regard the implementation phase of the policy-making process as an independent process separated from the actual policy formulation process. This view suggests that it is the political masters that formulate policy, while it is the bureaucracy or operatives that implement the policy. This hierarchical view of the policy formulation/implementation relationship tends to oversimplify the overall process by casting implementation as an "automatic follow-on from policy decisions" (Barrett and Fudge 1981, 9). Experiences show that this is not always the case as considerable negotiation and bargaining is often required among participants in order to achieve successful implementation.

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<sup>1</sup> An example noted by Tindal and Tindal (1987) demonstrating the impact that economic performance can have on decision-making comes from Toronto, Ontario where the economic slowdown of the 1970s precipitated council to overlook height and density restrictions on downtown development.



The previous discussion surrounding barriers or constraints to implementation have emphasized that policy-making and implementation is not a rational endeavour. Rather, it is evident that successful implementation and policy-making is fraught with difficulties and desired or expected results should not be considered a given. The previously noted definition of implementation, which assumed a rational, sequential process is thus found to be lacking in its ability to describe and explain the complexity of the implementation process. A more realistic and accurate model is required that can account for the complexity of the environment in which implementation transpires.

Other explanatory models, referred to by Cloke (1987) as the "bottom-up" models, assume a more realistic view of the world by recognizing the "influence of political and economic institutions on the activities of planning and policy" (Ibid., 21). From this perspective, incongruencies between policy and implementation are attributable to the "changing balance of influence among these institutions, and decision-making processes represent bargaining and negotiation between different interests" (Ibid., 21). Because the environment in which planning and policy-making transpires is more often-than-not complicated, vague, full of uncertainty, and affected by a range of players with diverse interests, implementation can be regarded as little more than "making things happen" (Barrett and Fudge 1981).

For the policy implementor it is perhaps communication and coordination that are most important in the context of a non-rational world. Each of these are not only vital for those directly involved with implementation (i.e., internal players) but also for external players. Lack of either effective communication or coordination between players can lead directly to the implementation failure. Often difficulties with communication and

coordination are the result of "political aspects of interpersonal and inter-agency relations" such as differences in value systems between individuals or agencies, and ambiguities in roles and responsibilities (Ibid., 16). Without effective coordination of activities it is less probable that implementation will directly follow a policy decision. Involved parties must be brought together towards the common goal, be aware of, and follow, the same agenda if implementation is to be successful.

When either effective communication or coordination is lacking, it may be the result of a lack of consensus whether that be over the policy direction, conflicting objectives or implementation strategies, or more deeply-rooted differences over the division of power. Many of the factors which influence consensus are politically-charged and therefore require extraordinary measures to overcome and correct. At the root of generating consensus is negotiation, bargaining, compromise and positive interaction between involved players. In this context, implementation can be regarded as an interactive bargaining and compromise process so long as the ultimate objective of the process remains putting policy into effect. It should be noted that the process of bargaining and compromise between players with different values, agendas, interests, and priorities may result in the implementation of policy which differs from its original form and which may produce outcomes previously unexpected.

The value of the bottom-up approach is that it focuses on "how and why individuals and groups of decision-makers act the way they do" (Cloke 1987, 22). Within the backdrop of the complex environment in which policy-making is undertaken, implementation becomes a task of conflict resolution and gaining control over the resources necessary to achieve success. While more "realistic" than the rational model, the bottom-up models have

not gone without criticism due to an underlying bias towards the multitude of micro-decisions that comprise the implementation process at the expense of the broader, and much more influential political constraints on decision-making.

As a result of the inability of either the rational or bottom-up models to fully explain either the policy-making process or the implementation gap, the best qualities of each of the models have been combined into the so-called hybrid models. These models explicitly acknowledge that policy implementation is a complex process where certain, clearly defined steps must be taken and, equally, that the complexity of the policy-making environment necessitates conflict resolution and a series of carefully calculated responses to various elements of that environment. Beyond this, the hybrid model is able to distinguish that the relationship between policy and implementation is not static but rather it is a dynamic continuum that is constantly evolving. In this context, implementation is essentially "the continuum of policy-action interactions, representing the bargaining and negotiation procedures between those willing to influence the course of events and those who control the access to power required for any such change" (Ibid., 24).

Implementation is clearly a pivotal aspect of the policy-making process. But it is also extremely fragile given the impact that the external environment can have on it. Without effective implementation, successful policy-making is placed in jeopardy. Overcoming the many barriers and constraints that the policy-making environment presents is critical but not necessarily an easy task. Cloke suggests three basic strategies to overcoming these barriers:

1. Alterations to the implementation process;
2. Alterations to policy; and

### 3. Changes in government framework for planning.

#### 4.5 Summary

In general, public policy refers to specific government actions designed to achieve certain implicit and explicit intentions. The development of public policy invariably follows a life cycle whereby problems are transformed into issues, placed on the public agenda and transformed into policies which are later enacted and implemented. The policy-making process or cycle is affected by a number of variables and is subject to significant influences which may trigger, contain, delay, or cause modifications.

While this chapter touched briefly on the substance of policy, its primary focus is on the effectiveness of policy in terms of impact or, in other words, the translation of policies into actions. Of particular relevance to the development of effective growth management policy is the implementation process.

The policy process often falls short of original intentions due to problems with implementation. This phenomenon is referred to as the "implementation gap." A common explanation for this gap is the reliance of policy makers on the rational policy-making model where implementation is regarded as just one of a series of steps that comprise the rational policy-making process. Alternative models, termed "bottom-up approaches", recognize the complexity of the policy environment. Within this environment it is consensus, communication, and coordination which are the vehicles to overcome the implementation gap and achieve the successful implementation of policy.

As a result of the inability of either the rational or "bottom-up" models to fully explain either the policy-making process or the implementation gap, the best qualities of

each of the models have been combined into so-called hybrid models. These models explicitly acknowledge that policy implementation is a complex process where certain clearly defined steps must be taken and, equally, that the complexity of the policy-making environment necessitates conflict resolution, consensus generation, and a series of carefully calculated responses to various elements of that environment.

## CHAPTER 5

### MAKING A CASE FOR GROWTH MANAGEMENT IN GREATER VANCOUVER

#### 5.1. Introduction

This chapter outlines the extent of growth which has and will occur in the Greater Vancouver region and identifies the areas in which the effects of growth are most evident and have the most serious consequences. It also provides a comprehensive review of governance and planning systems currently in place in the region. The chapter concludes with an appeal for the need of coordinated and integrated regional planning in the form of legislated growth management as a means of controlling and managing population growth and preserving livability in the region.

#### 5.2. Growth Pressures in Greater Vancouver

The Greater Vancouver region is experiencing considerable population growth and faces several related problems such as urban sprawl, the rapid development of agricultural and environmentally sensitive areas, increased traffic congestion, and air pollution. The unfortunate result of these growth-related problems is a significant drop in the overall quality of life for residents of the area. The population of Greater Vancouver has nearly doubled between 1961 and 1991 (GVRD 1992e, 2). By all estimations, this rate of growth is expected to continue for the next 30 years. This section outlines the boundaries and characteristics of the region, details the extent of the population growth which is occurring,

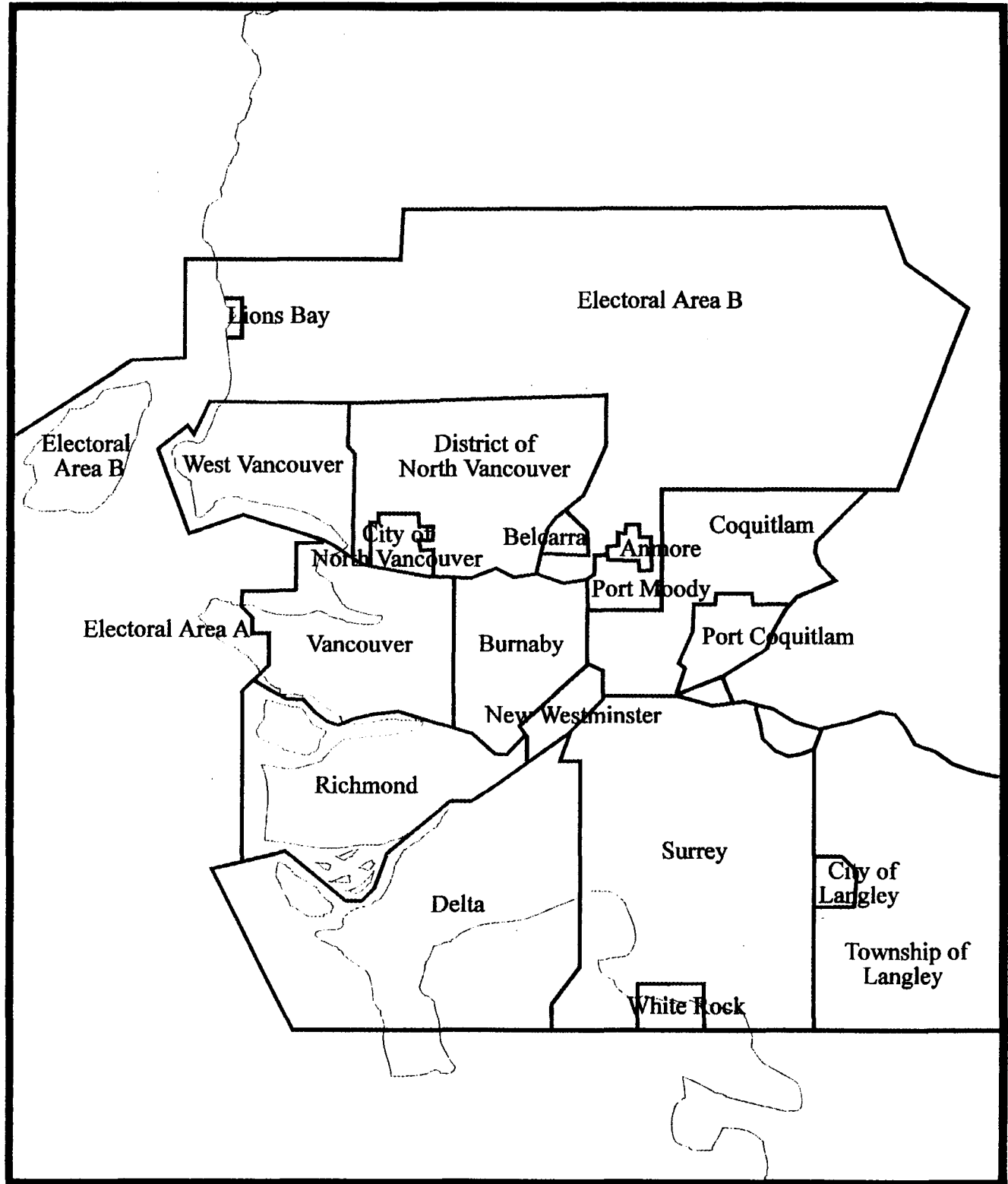
and identifies the areas where the effects of this growth are most evident.

#### 5.2.1. *The Region*

Located in the southwest corner of the British Columbia mainland, Greater Vancouver provides a spectacular natural setting and readily accessible outdoor recreation. It has developed a world-wide reputation as both a desirable place to live and as having a stable economic environment. It is the key coastal port for Canada, boasts a vibrant economy and supports a mix of large and small communities. It is for these reasons that the area is a prominent destination for Canadians from other regions, as well as growing numbers of international migrants.

The "Lower Mainland" of British Columbia is divided into four separate regions: Greater Vancouver, Central Fraser Valley, Dewdney-Alouette and Fraser-Cheam. The Greater Vancouver Regional District (GVRD) is the largest in population of these four regional districts (it is also the largest of the province's 29 regional districts and contains well over 50% of the province's population). Originally incorporated as the Regional District of Fraser-Burrard in 1967, its name was subsequently changed to its current designation in 1969. It is a federation of 18 municipalities and 3 electoral areas that make up the metropolitan area of Greater Vancouver. The GVRD spans 2,930 square kilometres and contained 1,581,426 people in 1992 (GVRD 1993i, 3-5) (see Map 5.1.).

**Map 5.1.**  
**Greater Vancouver Regional District (GVRD)**



Source: GVRD 1993c., 4



### *5.2.2. Population Growth*

Most projections place the population of the GVRD at 3,023,000 by the year 2021 (GVRD 1993h, 29). This is like adding a city the size of New Westminster to the region every year for the next thirty years. The Vancouver CMA (Census Metropolitan Area) is often used as an equivalent of the GVRD for statistical purposes since it is a territory defined by Statistics Canada and data is more readily available. The Vancouver CMA includes all of the GVRD municipalities and the municipalities of Pitt Meadows and Maple Ridge. It is among the fastest growing metropolitan areas in Canada and the United States. Fuelled by an expanding economy and a high quality of life, the Vancouver CMA grew by 12 percent from 1986 to 1990. This represents a tie with the Seattle / Tacoma CSMA for the fourth largest increase in a metropolitan area (over 1 million) in North America during this time frame (GVRD 1992, 5). This rate of growth continued in most recent years as the Vancouver CMA grew by 19.03% from 1986-1992 (GVRD 1993i, 5).

As of June 1990, the Vancouver CMA had well over 1.5 million people. By the year 2011, the Province of British Columbia is expected to have over 4,000,000 people - 2,166,200, or 54.2 percent of these people are expected to reside in the Vancouver CMA.

In 1991, well over 774,000 people were employed in the Vancouver CMA. By 2011, there are expected to be over 1,451,000. Additionally, the number of households is expected to rise from 671,000 in 1991 to 1,267,000 in 2021 (GVRD 1993h, 29). Greater Vancouver has a positive investment climate. It plays a strong role in the network of international commodity trade and is of increasing importance as a service centre producing for external markets. It acts as a gateway to the rapidly emerging economies of the Pacific Rim and is a major thoroughfare for the movement of foreign goods destined for British

Columbia, Canada and the U.S.. Additionally, Greater Vancouver holds opportunities for cost effective production, such as energy costs, raw materials and business services (GVRD 1991b, 6-10).

It is not only the staggering rate of population increase which poses a threat to the region's livability. The changing age structure and ethnic diversity of the population further complicate matters. The average age in the GVRD is expected to reach 41 by the year 2021 (GVRD 1993h, 14). This aging of the population poses some significant land-use problems for Greater Vancouver since people in this age group tend to prefer single family homes and private automobile use. Further, the region's ever changing ethnic character continues to place demands on the types of housing and services required. For example, 29% of the region's population are foreign born (GVRD 1992a, 4), and this percentage will likely increase in the future.

There are two sources for this phenomenal growth rate. First, migration to the region from other parts of Canada as well as from other countries represent the dominant component of population growth. For example, the net population movement to British Columbia between January and March, 1993 was 15,7550. Well over 50% of these immigrants were from other countries. Immigration is up 22% from 1992 and the total net in-flow for 1993 could reach 65,000. Second, natural increase in Greater Vancouver's population will account for about a third of future growth (GVRD 1993g, B1).

The precise rate of future regional growth is questionable. However, nearly all analysts agree that Greater Vancouver will be forced to absorb significant growth in the years to come. Several signs are beginning to emerge which indicate that this growth must be managed more effectively. These trends are outlined in the following sections.

### 5.2.3. *Land-Use Patterns*

A recent development proposal in Maple Ridge had residents speculating that a quiet corner of their community would be transformed into a noisy, traffic congested industrial site if a zoning change was approved. This is indicative of the situation in nearly all outlying areas of Greater Vancouver as developers scurry to meet a market for single family homes, townhouses, and commercial / industrial property. Many municipalities like Maple Ridge are facing unprecedented development pressures. Historically viewed as quiet farming communities, these prime agricultural areas are being transformed into suburbs of Vancouver linked by increasingly congested freeways. Urban form in Greater Vancouver is characterized by a central downtown core surrounded by communities of lower and lower densities. The average 1991 population density in the GVRD was 493 persons per square kilometre compared to 3467 for Metro Toronto (Seelig and Artibise 1991, 35)

The face of Greater Vancouver is changing rapidly as growing numbers of people settle in the region. The annual value of building permits issued in Greater Vancouver rose from roughly \$1.5 billion in 1986 to well in excess of \$3.5 billion in 1992 (GVRD 1993i, 54). Figures released for the first few months of 1993 suggest that this phenomenal rate of growth is continuing:

If the level of construction activity witnessed thus far in 1993 is sustained, Greater Vancouver could achieve a new record for annual investment in urban development across the region. Assuming the pace for the first five months of 1993 is maintained, projections of building permit activity for 1993 forecast that almost \$4 billion will be invested in construction projects by the end of 1993 (GVRD 1993g, 1).

The land-use patterns emerging from this growth are as important as the growth itself. The development industry in Greater Vancouver is driven by residential growth.

Housing starts in the region increase each year. According to the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, "Vancouver is forecast to reach 21,834 housing starts in 1993. This is the first year ever that Vancouver has rivalled Toronto as the centre with the highest starts" (GVRD 1993g, 12). Population growth pressures coupled with existing development patterns and geographic constraints have nearly exhausted the region's land base. The GVRD has estimated that land currently planned for single family development will be used up by 2006 (GVRD 1992a, 5).

Significant development is occurring in the Fraser Valley east of Delta and south of the Fraser River. According to the GVRD, an additional 608,000 dwellings will be required in the region between 1991 and 2021. If current trends are continued 51% of the estimated regional population growth will occur in North Surrey, the Langleys, Abbotsford, Matsqui and Chilliwack. These are the prime agricultural areas of the Fraser Valley. Some common criticisms of this sprawling pattern of development include: an emphasis on automobile dependence; excessive expenditure on infrastructure; encroachment onto agricultural land; and, an ineffective distribution of jobs in relation to housing (GVRD 1992d, 24-25).

Population growth in itself is not a problem for the region. In fact, many economic theorists link population growth with economic prosperity. Historic and current growth is likely the primary contributor to prosperity in the region. Consequently, any growth management model introduced in the Greater Vancouver should encourage full growth rather than attempt to restrict it.

#### 5.2.4. *Transportation Issues*

The looming population explosion coupled with sprawling low-density development and an automobile dominated society can only mean increased congestion and air pollution in the region's future. The primary transportation-related problems within the region include an overdependence on automobile use and the decreasing role of public transit.

There are approximately one million registered vehicles throughout the GVRD (GVRD 1993h, 30). With two vehicles for every three people, it is no wonder that residents of the GVRD face increasingly congested freeways. Evidence suggests that our auto-oriented, travel intensive lifestyle will continue as the baby boom generation approaches its most intensive auto-using years of life. In fact, the number of cars registered for travel to work grew almost twice as fast as the region's population between 1985 and 1992 (GVRD 1993h, 30). Most estimates indicate that the number of vehicles on the road will double in 30 years. This trend is extremely dangerous since 75% of emissions turning the sky brown come from automobiles.

The percentage of travellers using public transit fell from 11.2% in 1985 to 9.9% in 1991 (GVRD 1993h, 30). An extension of current trends will see this percentage continue to decline. In addition, the average commuter in the GVRD spends a total of 48 minutes driving to and from work. By 2000 this could increase to a full hour (GVRD's report *Freedom to Move* cited in Seelig and Artibise 1991, 60).

Transportation and land-use planners are concerned about atmospheric quality as roads become crowded with more and more commuters. It is evident that we must begin to plan in a new way if we are to avoid the traffic jams and smog alerts which characterize most large American cities. A comprehensive approach is urgently required. According to

GVRD planner Martin Crilly, "a regional strategy should direct growth into pedestrian and transit-oriented regional town centres - six of them - including the potential for a region with two high density cores (Vancouver and Whalley), and accentuate a re-balance of jobs and housing throughout the region to allow people to live closer to work and cut the need to travel" (Vancouver Courier 1992, 1-2).

A new approach known as transportation demand management is currently being introduced by planners at the regional level. This approach, which attempts to link transport and land-use management, is intended to reduce the amount of travel to work and change the mode and time of travel. Transportation demand management must be incorporated into any growth management model introduced in the region. However, it is highly unlikely that regional transportation problems will be solved without an expanded GVRD transportation planning mandate.

#### *5.2.5. Environmental Factors*

Land is being used inefficiently and unwisely in the region. The result is a general degradation in environmental quality throughout Greater Vancouver. Air and water quality are the two areas where the effects of growth have had the most devastating environmental effects. The three critical air quality issues in the GVRD have been linked to transportation. These include local air pollution, ozone layer depletion, and greenhouse gas emissions. For example, 75-80% of the GVRD's production of 600,999 tonnes of air pollutants come from motor vehicles (GVRD 1993g, 15). Air quality readings in Greater Vancouver are repeatedly over the 25 "good" mark.

Other areas where adverse impacts from growth are most evident include pollution

in the Fraser River, shrinking of the agricultural land base (which loses 900 hectares of land to urban development each year), and a poor recycling record due to dispersed land-use patterns which increase collection costs and decrease participation rates. Many municipalities in the GVRD are just now introducing recycling programs for multi-family complexes.

The development services mandate of the GVRD has only indirect influence over municipal environmental programs. For example, the success of the GVRD's goal to reduce emissions in the Lower Mainland by 50% by the year 2000 is entirely dependent upon the cooperation of municipal governments. Any substantive attempt at regional environmental sustainability requires that municipal compliance with regional programs be mandatory.

#### 5.2.6. *Other Factors*

In addition to the areas outlined above, the effects of population growth and a sprawling pattern of land development have been felt in areas such as the lack of affordable housing, overcrowded educational and health facilities, and an inability of the region to keep up with the demand for hard services such as water and sewerage lines.

### 5.3. Governance and Planning Systems in Greater Vancouver

Governance<sup>2</sup> and planning systems in Greater Vancouver are much the same as those found in other regions of Canada. In recent years, each of these systems have come under considerable criticism for their inability to effectively deal with the issues of the day. At

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<sup>2</sup> Governance and government are not synonymous. Governance can be defined as a system or process, while government refers to structures of representation and administration (Hill 1992).

the centre of this debate is the apparent inappropriateness of governance systems, and by association planning structures, to effectively address problems attributable to escalating growth. This failure is seen by many as the primary impediment to the long-term preservation of Greater Vancouver's high livability and quality of life standards. A growing consensus exists among the general public and the private and public sectors that these systems and structures must evolve and change to meet the challenges of existing realities if the region's most important attributes are to be preserved in perpetuity.

Four levels of government -- federal, provincial, regional, and local -- operate in, and influence the Greater Vancouver region. The latter two have the most direct impact on the growth and development of the region, with the two senior government bodies assuming a lessor, but nevertheless important role.

Local government has historically been the most pivotal and most independent level of government in British Columbia. Dating back to the previous century it has primarily been the responsibility of local government to serve the diverse needs of the Province's citizens. An extensive land mass and a dispersed population have made it difficult for the provincial government to effectively provide services leading local governments to assume the role as the primary supplier of services. Originally, local governments were able to do anything that was not explicitly prohibited by the Province. Over time, the provincial government has increased its control over local governments by establishing strictly defined mandates<sup>3</sup> permitting them to undertake only specific functions and activities, and by

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<sup>3</sup> Local governments are often required by the Province to perform specific activities, with or without funding, as administrative extensions of itself. Commonly mandated activities include the provision of fire and policing services, and the construction and maintenance of roads. Processes, such as elections and rezonings, have similarly been mandated by the Province. All mandates are created through provincial legislation (Bish 1990).



assuming greater control over their finances and monitoring to ensure compliance with legislation (Bish 1990).

British Columbia has an established tradition of intermunicipal governance dating back to the early part of this century when voluntary associations, such as the Greater Vancouver Water District (1926) and the Greater Vancouver Sewer and Drainage District (1914), were forged between local governments for the purpose of providing and maintaining services.<sup>4</sup> An administrative focus persists to this day. Greater Vancouver's approach to intermunicipal governance has been described by Cameron and Karlsen (1992, 2) as "*ad hoc* incrementalism, an approach which creates intermunicipal institutions only where the continued delivery of a service by municipalities alone is unfeasible." Intermunicipal cooperation initiated by local governments can also be described as "bottom-up." This approach has served Greater Vancouver exceptionally well as is evident by the ability of local municipalities "to make local self-determination work to meet regional objectives more successfully than any other urban region in North America (Ibid., 3).

Greater Vancouver's first true regional government was the Lower Mainland Regional Planning Board (LMRPB). Established in 1949 for the purposes of coordinating and managing intermunicipal services, it encompassed 28 municipalities in the Lower Mainland spanning from Vancouver to Hope. Its earliest responsibilities were essentially research and investigation focusing on the effects of regional growth,<sup>5</sup> and educating member municipalities on the implications of this growth. Notably, its research focus was

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<sup>4</sup> In many instances, the establishment of a voluntary association was followed by a direct request to the Province for enabling legislation.

<sup>5</sup> The LMRPB studied varied topics such as residential settlement dynamics, urban sprawl, agricultural viability, industrial location, and open space requirements (FPA 1991).

the entire Lower Mainland, which was at the time considered to be a single planning area. Besides these roles the LMRPB was mandated a regulatory role that prescribed the creation of a coordinated regional plan. In 1963, the *Chance and Change Report* was published outlining a vision of "Livable Cities in a Sea of Green." The central theme of the document, as indicated by its title, was the "logical" control of growth and the preservation of the Lower Mainland's valuable agricultural land resources.

From this ground-breaking work came the Lower Mainland's first regional plan -- the *Official Regional Plan* -- in 1966. As a statutory land-use plan, it gave the LMRPB regulatory powers over municipal plans and zoning, as well as representing the first real attempt to provide structure and direction to decision-making and planning in the Lower Mainland (FPA 1991; LMRPB 1966). Of greatest significance, the 1966 Plan established a framework for the creation of local plans and policies, regional and local land-use development, and the coordination of senior government activities (Corke 1983; Oberlander and Smith 1991). Although changes have occurred, this initial framework is still evident over two decades later.

Binding on area municipalities, the Province and its agencies, the Plan sought to address development issues that were outside the scope of local municipalities such as: major highways and transportation linkages; regional recreational facilities; pollution; land development policies; major utilities; and, future industrial and agricultural land needs. It established regional policies and objectives for "orderly development [public and private] in the Region" (LMRPB 1966, 2) within the context of satisfying the needs of Lower Mainland residents. Interestingly, these objectives closely resemble objectives advanced by contemporary Lower Mainland regional districts. The 1966 Plan's regional objectives were:

orderly, staged and diversified development; an adequate environment that meets the needs of inhabitants; sensible and suitable land-use; the efficient and effective movement of goods and people; and a sound economy providing a broad range of employment opportunities throughout the region. Each objective was supported by specific policies. Perhaps the Plan's most significant component was its provisions for region-wide land-use planning. The best suited land-uses and types of development were defined for designated development areas. In addition, specific policies were developed for urban, rural, industrial, park, and reserve areas.

Even though the work of the LMRPB has been described as the pinnacle of planning activities in the region (Seelig and Artibise 1991), political tensions led the Province to dissolve and subsequently divide the planning area into four regional districts which were established in 1965 as part of a province-wide system of regional districts. Regional districts were rationalized as an effective mechanism to address issues beyond the scope of smaller jurisdictions, especially the rapid growth experienced around Victoria and Vancouver. The provincial government of the day, rather than focusing exclusively on these centres, created, through amendments to the *British Columbia Municipal Act*, 28 regional districts that covered the province's entire land area. Boundaries were established based on a major centre and its outlying trading region.

Regional districts represented a form of "general-purpose" local government for unincorporated areas of the province and were responsible for providing functions and facilities and performing activities (Bish 1990). They also represented a mechanism for improved cooperation among member municipalities and combined financial resources without having to resort to amalgamation or special statute (Gertler, Lord, Stewart 1975).

The governing structure of British Columbia's regional districts are remarkably similar even though they differ dramatically in terms of area, population, and population density.<sup>6</sup> Each district has a governing board comprised of elected municipal officials appointed by local governments and independent elected members from electoral areas. A municipality's number of elected members and their voting weight are based on its population. A complex calculation procedure is used to determine the number of votes assigned to each board member; each member has between one and five votes. A system of weighted voting requires a "relatively high level of consensus for general regional board activities" (Bish 1990, 38).

Each regional district undertakes two types of activities -- those mandated by the Province and those permitted by member municipalities or unincorporated areas. Mandated activities, similar to those of municipal governments, have changed considerably since the inception of regional districts. Originally, their only mandated activities were the "general planning for development of the region" (Ibid., 38) and hospital planning (Gertler, Lord and Stewart 1975).

By 1968 nearly all regional districts were undertaking "rudimentary planning" although the effectiveness and quality of these activities ranged significantly (Ibid.). Discrepancies were attributed to insufficient coordination and direction from the provincial government, and limited staff and resources. Primary planning responsibilities included supervising and approving regional plans and settlement plans for non-municipal areas.

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<sup>6</sup> For example, the Sunshine Coast Regional District has an area of 3,824 km<sup>2</sup> while the Peace River Regional District covers an area in excess of 115,00 km<sup>2</sup>. Similarly, the Greater Vancouver Regional District had a 1986 population of 1,409,378 (480.69 people/km<sup>2</sup>) in comparison to a population of 3,167 (0.13 people/km<sup>2</sup>) in the Centre Coast Regional District (Bish 1990, 36).

Because control over planning was general in nature, area municipalities had considerable influence over planning as a result of the weighted voting system.

Other non-planning related duties were originally not legislatively assigned by the Province since it was rationalized that each region had its own unique problems and would determine additional duties as required. Once determined, however, regional districts could apply directly to the Province for supplementary letters patent providing them with necessary powers.

Regional districts are able to have a considerable regional impact by way of various voluntary functions centring on the provision of goods, services, controls, and regulations within the region.<sup>7</sup> These functions, which must be determined by regional board members or by referendums, may apply to a single electoral area within the regional district or to the entire district. In 1989, each regional district was responsible for an average of 15 functions with the majority applying to only a portion of its entire area (Bish 1990).

Regional governments in the Lower Mainland have always had to contend with many obstacles, especially the autonomy of the Province and local municipalities. For example, in 1966 the Lower Mainland Regional Planning Board was prepared to establish an official regional plan. Ironically, the attainment of this important goal was not well received by either the municipalities nor the Province, and was instead greeted with friction and conflict. Instead of being considered a success the LMRPB had precipitated its own collapse, and was officially dissolved in 1968 (Teetzel 1992).

This example indicates the extent of influence that municipal governments have over

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<sup>7</sup> Common voluntary functions include ambulance services, bus transit, emergency programs, garbage collection and disposal, health regulations, subdivision control, local and regional parks, and water supply (Bish 1990).

regional districts. Clearly, it is in their control to either support the policy directions of the regional government or subvert them. Representatives of local governments are often criticized for their attitudes towards regional government and their planning efforts, especially when decisions are made that fail to correspond to their rhetoric regarding the importance of maintaining the regional perspective. At the heart of this criticism is the steadfast resistance of municipalities to any erosion of their powers, or conversely, heightened powers of the regional district. The reality of the situation is that local governments are far more responsive to the needs and demands of their local populace than to the region as a whole. This leads to decision-making in the best interest of neighbourhoods rather than on the basis of what is best for the region. This dynamic is driven by the lobbying powers of neighbourhoods and cries of NIMBY (Not in My Back Yard). NIMBYs are criticised for their inability to see the relationship between the neighbourhood and broader regional issues such as environmental quality. Local governments that cater to NIMBYs are making the strategic mistake of focusing exclusively on the short-term at the expense of the long-term. In the context of Greater Vancouver, the long-term perspective is synonymous with region-wide livability. According to Seelig and Artibise (1991, 89), "the explosion of NIMBY cases has resulted in a more parochial and fractionalized municipal government than ever before."

Regional districts, having to contend with not "rocking the boat," were delivered a major setback in 1983 when their regional planning mandate was eliminated with the passage of *Bill 9, The Municipal Act Amendment Act*. The Socred Government rationalized their decision in two ways. First, regional plans were perceived as a duplication of settlement and local plans that unnecessarily added an additional financial

burden on planning and land-use regulation. Second, regional plans were often used by municipalities to control development activities in other municipalities.<sup>8</sup> Regional districts still retain the power to prepare settlement plans for unincorporated areas of a region (Bish 1990; GVRD 1993f). Five additional explanations of the demise of regional planning duties are commonly cited. Each of these are the consequences of a heavy, "top-down" planning approach advanced by the regional districts:

1. *Failed Expectations.* Regional districts failed to meet the expectations of either local governments or the development community;
2. *Marginalization of the Business Community.* Regional districts failed to incorporate business concerns in policy-making;
3. *Unresponsive.* Regional districts were unresponsive to local issues.
4. *Conflicting Goals.* Regional goals were often in direct conflict with local goals; and
5. *More Government, More Bureaucracy.* Regional districts were perceived as another level of government that unnecessarily created lengthy, costly and sometimes contradictory planning processes negatively affecting local residents, communities and institutions (UDI 1991, 47).

Since 1983, there has been an "absence of comprehensive regional planning across British Columbia" (Teetzel 1992, 44). Municipal official community plans (OCPs) remain the sole tool for land-use planning in the region. The most significant fallout from the elimination of regional planning powers is the forced reliance of regional districts on the

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<sup>8</sup> This situation would arise when elected regional officials would use their voting powers to endorse regional plans that created an advantage for one municipality, and conversely, a disadvantage for another (Bish 1990).

"good will" of member municipalities when attempting to fulfil their mandates. The elimination of their planning powers, and the failure of the Province to reinstate their powers, has forced regional districts to govern by consensus which, as noted by Seelig and Artibise (1991), eludes them.

Although the regional districts that comprise Greater Vancouver have generally received passing grades and been relatively effectual,<sup>9</sup> they are still the target of much criticism (BC-RTE&E 1993; Cameron and Karlsen 1992; Hill 1992a; Oberlander and Smith 1991; Seelig and Artibise 1991). Many appraisals of the regional district system have been undertaken in the 20 years since their creation, including an evaluation in 1978 by the Regional District Review Committee (RDRC). The Committee identified several problems, including conflicts between regional and community plans, which as noted above, served as the primary rationale for eliminating regional planning powers. Also identified as a major shortcoming was the situation whereby one part of a region would impose policies on another part. Regarded as illegitimate use of political power, this action generated considerable controversy. Other commonly cited criticisms of regional districts, specifically the GVRD, are listed below:

1. *Leadership*: There is no clear regional leadership. The current system is fragmented and regional issues are often eclipsed by local or provincial perspectives;
2. *Lack of Coordinated and Mandated Response to Regional Issues*. Many pressing issues are regional in scope including housing supply, transport

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<sup>9</sup> Bish (1990, 48), for example, asserts that "the expansion of their [regional districts] activities in response to local decisions accompanied by a willingness to pay for those activities, indicates that they have filled an important gap."



systems, environmental protection, urban structure, the economy, land-use planning, and population growth. Currently, municipal participation at the regional level is purely voluntary in all of these areas. Also, planning and implementation of plans have simply not happened at the regional level;

3. *Inadequate Jurisdiction.* The GVRD's municipal membership stops at the Pitt River and the eastern Langley border. Growth in Greater Vancouver is now strongly influencing adjacent jurisdictions such as Maple Ridge, Mission, Matsqui and Abbotsford. GVRD membership needs to reflect this reality;
4. *Public Participation.* Public involvement in regional issues is minimal, as is public awareness and support for the GVRD. Limited community consultation every 12-15 years is not indicative of good public participation. Exercises such as the *Choosing Our Future* program, while desirable and necessary, are far too infrequent and isolated from real decision-making; and
5. *Growth and Fair Share.* The region has yet to develop or implement the concept of fair share in areas such as transportation planning, affordable housing, and growth management. There is no equity in who absorbs the negative impacts of growth and who pays. Moreover, the GVRD has yet to address the issue of limits to growth, either in specific areas or for the region as a whole. Neither the growth ethic nor growth's winners and losers have been seriously examined (FPA 1991, 6-7).<sup>10</sup>

Another criticism focuses on the perpetuation of their historical role as administrator

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<sup>10</sup> See also Vancouver Board of Trade (1991) for additional criticisms of planning and governance in Greater Vancouver.

of services. According to Reid (1992), pursuit of a single goal of administrative efficiency through coordination and integration puts in serious jeopardy the ability of regional districts to promote the preservation of natural and man-made environments, integration of communities in decision-making, promotion of citizen participation, and management of growth within the confines of natural carrying capacities.

For these and other reasons there exists a growing concern that the present system of regional governance is incapable of taking the necessary actions to preserve livability in Greater Vancouver. More directly, they are unable to achieve the broader goal of "balancing growth and prosperity with livability and sustainability; balancing economic goals with respect for the natural and built environments and the human need for community" (FPA 1991, 5). Stakeholders, including government itself, are recognizing the imperative of a complete over-haul of the existing system<sup>11</sup> and the need to install a new system that is more responsive to the issues and realities of the day.

The search for an appropriate system is an arduous task that is heavily influenced by stakeholders bearing divergent goals and interests. Hill (1992, 9) suggests three governance options for consideration in Greater Vancouver: a system offering more bureaucratic / regulatory, top-down control;<sup>12</sup> a system promoting less control over market forces;<sup>13</sup> and, "a structure of responsible governance appropriate to manage the substantive issues at hand

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<sup>11</sup> As a legacy of the Victorian era current governance systems can be described as "predominantly centralized, sectoral, reactive, short-term, adjudicative, adversarial, closed, and elitist" (BC-RTE&E 1992, 62).

<sup>12</sup> This approach to regional governance was employed by regional districts in British Columbia between 1969 and 1983. It was dismantled in 1983 because, among other things, it was seen as excessively top-down and did not effectively respond to local issues.

<sup>13</sup> This system, termed a "development services" approach, has been employed by the GVRD since 1983 and in other regional districts since 1989.

with adequate authority for the task." Neither of the first two options appear to offer a solution to the problems faced by the citizens of Greater Vancouver, nor do they offer government that is "decentralized, intersectoral, proactive, anticipatory, long-term, participatory, cooperative, open and egalitarian" (BC-RTE&E 1992, 62). Past experience shows that a regulatory / bureaucratic approach would fail because of its top-down, authoritative position that impinges on the autonomy of local government. Similarly, the recent history of the development services approach clearly indicates that it would not be able to attain regional goals especially the preservation of Greater Vancouver's livability. This is the present approach used by the GVRD, and although considerable gains have been made using a "consensus-based approach" it will not be able to progress much further.

The third option, that can be termed "good government," is the holy grail that is currently being sought. In the search for a good system of governance, it is recommendable and necessary that the chosen system meet the following five tests of adequacy:<sup>14</sup>

1. *Jurisdictional Adequacy.* The proposed system must be capable of accurately tracking and identifying the regional implications of local decisions, particularly local land-use decisions. The system must ensure that the regional interest prevails where appropriate;
2. *Environmental Adequacy.* The proposed system must balance the interests and needs of the present population with those of various ecosystems and future generations;
3. *Social Adequacy.* The proposed system must give adequate voice to the

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<sup>14</sup> Artibise and Hill (1993) have developed a similar list of evaluative criteria for governance systems that focuses on meeting the challenges of sustainability in the Georgia Basin.

interests of the disadvantaged, the aged, and the diverse ethnic groups present in the region;

4. *Economic Adequacy*. The proposed system must be capable of managing growth in a cost-effective manner; and
5. *Geographic Adequacy*. Since an increasing percentage of Greater Vancouver's population lives outside the GVRD's geographic boundaries, the proposed system must be capable of adequately addressing the long-term needs of the larger region (GVRD 1991a, 5).

Besides meeting these tests, a new system of good government must balance "local / municipal autonomy and effective regional coordination to ensure the region's livability" (Hill 1992a, 14).

Devising, or selecting, a model of governance that represents good government as indicated by the previous criteria is not, however, an simple matter. This is evident in the number of position papers on governance reform that have recently been published. Diverse groups, ranging from the Urban Development Institute (UDI) to the Forum for Planning Action (FPA), are in agreement that reform is needed yet their contrasting philosophical roots have lead to recommendations with underlying messages that vary considerably.

At minimum, reforms are required in three critical areas if effective and efficient governance is to become a reality in Greater Vancouver -- provincial leadership, regional government, and citizen participation (FPA 1991; Seelig and Artibise 1991; UDI 1991). Improved governance must start with strong provincial leadership and the necessary political will to make difficult decisions such as redrawing political boundaries or

delegating additional powers to lower governments. Effective and efficient governance also requires stronger regional governments with clear and broad legal mandates<sup>15</sup> -- regional districts can no longer rely exclusively on the voluntary compliance of municipal governments. Achieving this requires the restoration of regional planning powers that have been absent since 1983. Finally, the citizens of the region must be actively involved in strategy- and decision-making activities.

To date, little progress has been made towards securing effective and efficient governance in the Greater Vancouver region beyond academic debate, publishing of position papers, and the organization of conferences to discuss the issues. The longer that the debate on reforming governance continues without real progress, the greater are the threats to Greater Vancouver's livability, which is, ironically, the very issue that has spawned this debate.

#### 5.4. A Case for Regional Growth Management

All of the problems attributable to the region's rapid population growth can be linked to a common theme; the quality of life in Greater Vancouver is declining and will continue to decline unless strong and meaningful actions are taken to address and manage this growth. Unfortunately, most problems related to urban growth extend beyond local boundaries. For example, the effects of traffic congestion and air pollution do not respect artificial municipal boundaries. Local governments simply do not have the capability to

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<sup>15</sup> Suggested mandated responsibilities include: planning for regional transportation and public transit services; regional land-use planning; regional waste management; air and water quality control; regional planning for affordable housing; water services; development and operation of regional parks and green belts; and collection and dissemination of data related to the above (FPA 1991).

deal effectively with these regional problems.

Greater Vancouver lacks a regional authority which has the mandate and power to address region-wide issues. The GVRD, which operates on a consensus-based approach, is not equipped to identify and track the regional implications of local decisions. In addition, the development services mandate of the GVRD lacks sufficient authority to implement regional goals. In short, there is no guarantee that regional interests will prevail in the local decision-making arena. The existing system is not equipped to meet the challenges facing British Columbia's Greater Vancouver region:

Today's GVRD, along with other regional districts, is completely dependent on the good will of the participating municipalities. While municipal representatives talk about the importance of regional planning, they do not always practice in their own municipalities what they preach in regional district meetings. We have a unique situation: municipalities looking primarily after local neighbourhoods; regional governments trying to govern by a consensus that eludes them; and provincial authorities simply incorporating municipal plans into their larger ones. And no one is addressing the general regional issues that are most critical - the environment, housing, the economy, transportation, and the overall quality of life (Seelig and Artibise 1991, 91).

This view is widely held by a multitude of private sector groups which see the region's livability and its attractiveness to external investors slipping away:

The notable characteristic of growth management activities in the region is the lack of a regional perspective. The Regional Advisory Board (of the six Lower Mainland Regional Districts) is purely advisory. Provincial legislation gives land-use planning and development control authority to more than 24 municipalities in the region. Federal and provincial agencies exercise regulatory authority that affects growth. There is no common regional growth strategy. There are two dozen local versions. Any municipality can ignore or promote any or all of the 54 action items (VBT 1991, 3).

This inherent weakness in the region's governance system has now created significant obstacles for implementation of the GVRD's Livable Region Strategy as individual municipalities like Surrey refuse to comply with regional growth targets:

Planner challenges GVRD plan for Surrey - Planning manager Lehman Walker can't accept the GVRD's intention to pack 660,000 people into north and central Surrey by 2021 (Surrey & North Delta Now 1993, A14).

The expansion and integration of regional planning powers is required in areas which transcend municipal boundaries such as transportation, land-use, and air quality . This necessity is widely recognized by professional planners, administrators, academics and the private sector. However, it is opposed by some groups such as municipal councils which are reluctant to give up any planning powers which they currently possess. It is imperative that any new system of regional governance not be interpreted as a fourth level of government.

Regional governance has long been an item of heated debate in British Columbia. In particular, the issue of regional land-use planning has dominated discussion among academics, bureaucrats, developers and citizens alike. Prior to 1983, regional planning was a mandate of regional districts permitting Regional Boards to supervise and approve general regional plans and settlement plans for areas outside municipal boundaries. With the passage of Bill 9 in 1983 regional planning authority and the legal status of official regional plans was eliminated. Regional land-use planning, and regional governance in general, continues to be a contentious issue, and it will certainly be a focal point in any debate concerning the introduction of growth management legislation. Nevertheless, it appears as though support exists for change at various levels of the provincial government:

There is an obvious need for some form of governing system which covers the areas affected by urban growth and, in particular, deals with environmental, transportation, housing, and service issues (Blencoe 1992); and

Planning and regional planning must be restored to the regional districts. And I can assure you that a Mike Harcourt-led New Democrat government will restore your letters patent for planning (Harcourt 1991).

A legislated growth management program similar to those recently employed in some American states is the solution to the region's declining livability. However, this program cannot simply be perceived as another level of bureaucracy or regulatory burden. Taxpayers are no longer willing to accept the mismanagement of scarce public resources. It must be a program tailored to the political and economic realities of the region but with a clear mandate to foster cooperation between competing levels of government. Furthermore, it must focus on important issues and provide clear direction. The potential application of the existing regional government structure in the Lower Mainland to the development of a growth management strategy will be explored further in Chapter 12. This strategy must answer a number of important questions:

1. How much growth should occur?
2. Where should this growth occur?
3. What reallocation of functions and authority are required at the provincial, regional, and municipal levels of government are required?
4. How are the costs of growth to be funded? and,
5. How will the model be implemented?

#### 5.5. Summary

The population of Greater Vancouver is expected to grow by an additional one million people by the year 2011. Current development patterns coupled with a system of regional governance ill equipped to direct and manage this growth have resulted in urban sprawl, poor air quality, traffic congestion, and inadequate supply of affordable housing. All of these can problems can be linked to a common theme; a declining quality of life



throughout the region. This trend will undoubtedly continue unless immediate measures are taken to embrace and manage this growth.

The development services mandate of the GVRD is not equipped to deal effectively with region-wide problems. It lacks real land-use planning and development authority and relies on a consensus model to achieve desired results. A strategy to accommodate growth on a regional level is desperately required as well as a cooperative model which involves municipal, regional and provincial governments. A legislated growth management model must identify where and how much growth should occur, how it will be funded, the reallocation of governmental responsibilities required, and, finally, a detailed implementation methodology.

## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSION - SECTION I

#### 6.1. Making a Case for Growth Management in Greater Vancouver

The intent of this section was to provide an overview of the principles of growth management, and to gauge its appropriateness as a means of preserving livability in Greater Vancouver.

As outlined in Chapter 3, growth management evolved in response to a broad range of social, economic and environmental concerns. Simply, growth management is a comprehensive approach to land-use, transportation, economic development, and social planning designed to guide the timing, location and quality of growth. The first wave of growth management initiatives initiated in the 1970s were regulatory in nature and aimed primarily at protecting the environment. More recent models, similar to that employed in the State of Washington, are more comprehensive and integrated in nature. The focus of growth management has evolved to encompass a broad range of social, environmental, mobility, and economic considerations. Growth management systems exist on a growth accommodating - growth restrictive spectrum with most leaning towards the latter. Finally, Chapter 3 contends that most criticisms of growth management focus on its conflicting goals and adverse impact on the supply of affordable housing due to restriction of the land supply.

To more fully develop the concept of growth management requires a rudimentary

understanding of the nature of public policy in general. The development of public policy follows a life cycle whereby problems are transformed into issues, placed on the public agenda, and ultimately implemented. Chapter 4 has focused on the translation of policies into effective action. In reality, the policy process often falls short of original intentions due to the complexities of the implementation process. Chapter 4 contends that a hybrid model which combines characteristics of "top-down" and "bottom-up" policy models is most suited to the implementation of public policy and growth management policy in particular.

The population of Greater Vancouver has more than doubled since 1961 and it is expected to grow by another 1 million people by the year 2011. Due to a sprawling pattern of land development and the separation of transportation and land-use planning, the adverse effects of this growth have manifested in congested freeways and diminishing environmental quality. Correction of these problems is hindered by the lack of a regional authority in Greater Vancouver with sufficient mandates and powers to address region-wide issues. In this sort of institutional environment it is debatable if regional interests can prevail when confronted by local and neighbourhood interests. A comprehensive, integrated and binding strategy to accommodate growth on a regional level is required if livability is to be preserved. This strategy, which will take the form of a legislated regional growth management model, necessitates reform of the region's system of governance and organization.

## **SECTION II**

### **FORGING A GROWTH MANAGEMENT STRATEGY FOR GREATER VANCOUVER**

## CHAPTER 7

### INTRODUCTION - SECTION II

#### 7.1. Forging a Growth Management Strategy for Greater Vancouver

Section I has concluded that a comprehensive and integrated regional growth management strategy is an appropriate mechanism to preserve livability in Greater Vancouver. Accordingly, this section lays the foundation for such a strategy. To accomplish this task, a detailed review of experiences with comprehensive land-use planning and growth management legislation in U.S. and Canadian jurisdictions is a necessary starting point. In addition, the development and implementation of this strategy requires an understanding of Greater Vancouver's past and present growth management experiences.

Chapter 8, entitled GROWTH MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS IN THE UNITED STATES, provides a systematic review of growth management systems in the United States. This chapter contends that the State of Washington provides the best example of comprehensive growth management to date. Hence, emphasis is placed on this state's experiences. This review utilizes the growth management framework developed in Chapter 4 as an analytical foundation.

Canada has a long and expansive tradition of land-use planning providing valuable lessons with the use, management, and planning of land resources. Similar to the study of American experiences, these lessons serve as an excellent foundation for the development

and implementation of comprehensive growth management in Greater Vancouver. Chapter 9, **LAND PLANNING AND GROWTH MANAGEMENT: THE CANADIAN CONTEXT**, reviews the theory and practice of land-use planning, existing administrative structures, common planning initiatives, and traditional implementation instruments and methods employed in Canadian cities and regions. Similar to Chapter 8, this chapter focuses on the experiences of a particular region -- Metro Toronto -- which is generally considered to be Canada's leading example of addressing complex, regional growth issues.

To utilize the principles which emerge from experiences with growth management in the U.S. and Canada, and to tailor them to the needs of Greater Vancouver, it is necessary to review recent growth management strategies, policies and initiatives. Chapter 10, entitled **TARGETING GROWTH: PRESERVING LIVABILITY IN GREATER VANCOUVER**, is intended to provide this background information. Prominent efforts to manage regional growth will first be reviewed. The chapter then goes on to identify barriers to the preservation of regional livability and assesses the prospects of preserving livability in the context of growth-oriented initiatives and strategies.

Chapter 11, **A GROWTH MANAGEMENT STRATEGY FOR GREATER VANCOUVER**, focuses on two questions. First, what are the institutional requirements to set the stage for efficient and effective regional growth management? and second, what are the necessary elements of a growth management model designed to preserve livability? These questions are answered by drawing upon analysis contained in previous chapters and utilizing the growth management principles previously described. The chapter first details the modifications to the existing institutional environment, specifically systems of regional governance, which are necessary to ensure the attainment of broad growth management and

livability goals and objectives. Second, a growth management model is forged from the analysis contained in previous chapters. Finally, Chapter 11 provides direction for regional land-use plan and local comprehensive plans which will need to be developed in accordance with this strategy.

A summary of the conclusions drawn from this analysis are contained in Chapter 12,

CONCLUSION - SECTION II.

## CHAPTER 8

### GROWTH MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS IN THE UNITED STATES

#### 8.1. Introduction

This chapter begins with a brief description of the existing U.S. legal framework as it relates to land-use planning and the implementation of formalized growth management systems. This is followed by a systematic review of growth management systems in several American states. The growth management framework developed in Chapter 3 is used as an analytical tool for this purpose. Finally, this chapter will offers an in-depth review of Washington State's experience with growth management. This analysis, which emphasizes the methodology of implementation, will be used as a building block for the Greater Vancouver growth management model which is proposed in Chapter 11.

#### 8.2. Legal Framework of American Growth Management

The development of techniques for growth management systems must take place within the framework of the existing legal system. Both the *United States Constitution* (and the *Washington State Constitution*) are based on a heritage of British Common Law which is shared with Canada. Some of the major legal issues in growth management are briefly described below.



### 8.2.1. *Property Rights*

Property rights are enshrined in the *United States Constitution* as part of *Article V of the Bill of Rights*:

No person shall be .... nor deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law, nor shall private property be taken for public use, without just compensation (Article V of the Bill of Rights).

In terms of growth management, this can often result in significant expenditures for state and local governments which must acquire or control the use of land in order to implement various land-use policies. However, the courts have rarely invalidated zoning and other land-use regulations on this basis.

### 8.2.2. *Eminent Domain*

When property is "taken for public use" by a government the principle invoked is the *Power of Eminent Domain*. The *Fourteenth Amendment* made it applicable to the state governments as well (Callies and Freilich 1986, 414-415). Since cities are "creatures" of themselves, the States can allow cities to exercise this power also, under the same restrictions.

### 8.2.3. *Police Power*

Police power is the source of all regulatory power, including zoning. It involves "the public regulation of property to prevent the use thereof in a manner that is detrimental to the public interest" (Ibid. 415).

#### 8.2.4. *Taking and Inverse Condemnation*

The term "taking" is used to describe violations of both eminent domain and police power, which tends to blur the distinctions between the two. *Violation of Eminent Domain*, in the form of taking for public use without compensation, would require compensation to the property owner. Eminent domain "takings" are "a valid exercise of a sovereign power." If the compensation is recovered after the "taking" occurs, this procedure is called "inverse condemnation" (Ibid., 415-416).

Inverse condemnation can be either "trespassory" or "nontrespassory." This would depend upon whether the government physically invaded the property in question (Ibid., 416). Most growth management regulations (if they are inverse condemnation) would be of the nontrespassory type, since the government normally does not physically invade the private property. A trespassory example might be an easement across private property along a shoreline.

#### 8.2.5. *The Scalia Standard*

The 1926 "litmus test" requiring a land-use regulation to be reasonably related to a public interest survived until the 1980s. The Court has consistently upheld local ordinances which were related to growth management, and were rationally related to the public health, safety, and welfare. An exception was in City of Boca Raton, Florida, where a cap on the number of dwelling units was not upheld by the Court. One reason for striking down the law was that it was established by public initiative and referendum, not by "good planning," and was therefore not "rationally related." Another reason for its downfall was that it was an absolute, fixed population cap, rather than a temporary moratorium on growth (Ibid. 823-

881).

In the case of *Nollans v. California Coastal Commission* (1987), a new standard was established by the Court. The Nollans wanted to replace a beach front house on their property, and were required to obtain a coastal development permit from the California Coastal Commission (CCC). The CCC's condition for granting that permit was that the Nollans transfer to the public, without compensation, an easement across their property. The CCC was concerned that the house would contribute to a wall of residential structures. During the litigation, the Nollans actually tore down their old house and built a larger one, without notifying the CCC. The U.S. Supreme Court called the required easement a "permanent physical occupation" of the Nollans property (Callies and Freilich Supplement 1988, 28-50).

The Court's new litmus test, written in Justice Scalia's majority opinion, was based on an "essential nexus" standard. It was no longer sufficient for a regulation to be "reasonably related" to the public interest, but rather, the regulation had to "substantially advance" the state's interest in order to be valid. There had to be a direct connection between the asserted public purpose of the land-use action and the conditions attached to the development's approval. The burden of the regulation must "fit" the condition which it is intended to alleviate. Given that the CCC's "asserted public purpose" was to allow visual access to the oceanfront, the requirement of a physical easement for the public was not appropriate. Therefore, the Court decided that the case should be treated as one of exaction, rather than one of legitimate use of police power (Ibid. 28-50).

The "essential nexus" standard will most likely be used in any court challenges to the constitutionality of growth management.

### 8.3. Growth Management at the State Level

As outlined in Chapter 3, the first wave of state growth management laws occurred during the 1970s. These laws were based on environmental considerations, corresponding to the *Federal Clean Air Act* and *Clean Water Act* of the early 1970s. For example, the impetus for growth management in California arose from concern over air and water pollution along the 1,100 mile coastline and was spearheaded by the Sierra club.

Alternatively, the impetus for growth management legislation in Hawaii, North Carolina and Vermont came from executive / legislative branches of government more so than from environmental groups. Oregon's approach was the most comprehensive in relation to current growth management legislation.

The second wave began during the early and mid-1980s. It is concerned mainly with issues such as quality of life, housing affordability, and infrastructure (DeAngelis 1990). Some of the most notable second wave efforts are taking place in Florida (1985), Georgia (1989), and New Jersey (1986). Typical characteristics of these states' growth management systems include:

1. Three tiers of planning;
2. Consistency among state, regional, and local plans;
3. Flexible review, monitoring, and revision procedures;
4. Comprehensiveness: quality of life, environment, open space conservation, energy efficiency, housing, transportation, etc.;
5. Urban growth boundaries and growth centres; and
6. Concurrency of development and infrastructure / improvements (DeAngelis 1990).

While the goals of the state programs are very similar, the greatest differences are evident in terms of the methods for achieving the desired consistency. In Florida's framework (also Oregon), consistency is "top-down"; that is, from state to regional to local. In both Florida and Oregon, the State sets the standards for the local plans, and then reviews the plans accordingly. Alternatively, the consistency is "bottom-up," in the State of Georgia. This means that local plans are assembled together to form regional plans, and the state plan is the sum of the regional plans (Huart 1992). New Jersey's framework utilizes both vertical and horizontal integration of plans, as well as a "cross-acceptance process" for approval of the State Plan (in other words, up and down and side to side consistency) (DeAngelis 1990; Southwestern Pennsylvania Regional Planning Commission 1990). The components of several state-wide growth management models are outlined in the following section.

### 8.3.1. *Growth Management Legislation*

State involvement in growth management can take many forms and often has a diverse set of objectives. The past two decades have witnessed the introduction of 13 comprehensive state sponsored growth management programs.<sup>16</sup> Table 8.1 outlines the growth management legislation in each of these 13 states.

---

<sup>16</sup> State sponsored refers to a system where land-use policy is largely managed and regulated through local or regional bodies whereas state administered refers to a system where land-use policy is managed by a state agency.

| <b>Table 8.1.</b><br><b>State Comprehensive Growth Legislation</b> |  |
|--|--|
| <b>State</b>   | <b>Legislation</b>   |
| California   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coastal Act, 1976</li> <li>• Coastal Zone Conservation Act, 1972</li> <li>• Tahoe (Lake) Regional Planning Compact, 1969</li> </ul>   |
| Florida  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Omnibus Growth Management Act</li> <li>• Local Government Comprehensive Planning and Land Development Regulation Act, 1985</li> <li>• State Comprehensive Plan, 1985</li> <li>• State and Regional Planning Act, 1984</li> <li>• Environmental Land and Water Management Act, 1972</li> </ul> |
| Georgia  | Coordinated Planning Legislation, 1989   |
| Hawaii   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hawaii State Plan, 1988</li> <li>• Hawaiian Land-use Law, 1961</li> </ul>   |
| Maine  | Comprehensive Planning and Land-use Regulation Act, 1988   |
| Maryland   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economic Growth, Resource Protection and Planning Act, 1992</li> <li>• Chesapeake Bay Critical Area Law, 1984</li> </ul>  |
| Massachusetts  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cape Cod Commission Act, 1989</li> <li>• Martha's Vineyard Commission Act, 1974</li> </ul>  |
| New Jersey   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• State Planning Act, 1985</li> <li>• State Pinelands Protection Act, 1979</li> </ul>   |
| California   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coastal Act of 1976</li> <li>• Coastal Zone Conservation Act, 1972</li> <li>• Tahoe (Lake) Regional Planning Compact, 1969</li> </ul>   |
| New Jersey   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• State Planning Act, 1985</li> <li>• State Pinelands Protection Act, 1979</li> </ul>   |

| <b>Table 8.1. - Continued<br/>State Comprehensive Growth Legislation</b> |   |
|--|---|
| <b>State</b>   | <b>Legislation</b>  |
| New York   | Adirondack Park Agency Act, 1979  |
| Oregon   | Land Conservation and Development Act, 1973   |
| Rhode Island   | Comprehensive Planning and Land-use Regulation Act, 1988  |
| Vermont  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Amendments to Chapter 117 (Act 280), 1990</li> <li>• Growth Management Act (Act 200), 1988</li> <li>• Environmental Control Act (Act 250), 1970</li> </ul> |
| Washington State   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• House Bill 2929, Growth Management Act, 1990</li> <li>• House Bill 1025 (amendments), 1991</li> </ul>  |

Source: Bollens 1992, 455

Each of these programs was initiated through, and in response to, state actions and each of them share the following characteristics:

1. State legislative enactment;
2. Mandate or encourage preparation of local comprehensive plans and, in some cases, county or regional plans;
3. Mandate or encourage plan submittal to state and/or substate body for review and comment, approval, or negotiation;
4. Maintain a system of incentives and/or disincentives to encourage compliance or cooperation;
5. Mandate or encourage limits on the number and/or character of plan amendments; and,
6. Mandate or encourage periodic plan updating (Gale 1992, 427).

While these programs are unique with respect to growth policy design, they are all comprehensive and multifunctional in nature (Bollens 1992, 454-455).

For comparative purposes, this section will emphasize programs enacted by seven state legislatures: Oregon, Florida, Maine, Vermont, Rhode Island, Georgia, and New Jersey (The Washington State Growth Management model is included in the tables for these sections; however, this state's growth management program is reviewed in more detail in a subsequent section). These systems are examined in light of the following criteria: Goals and Objectives, Growth Management Tools, and Organizational Principles.

#### 8.3.2. *Goals and Objectives*

As outlined in section 4.4, the goals of growth management encompass a broad range of social, environmental, and economic considerations. The objective of nearly all of the state programs discussed in this section is to implement state land-use, environmental and economic development plans through comprehensive plans. Some of the states with extreme levels of growth are concerned with maintaining levels of public services which are concurrent with growth. The overriding intent of all of these goals, which are outlined in Table 8.2., is to enhance quality of life. These goals and objectives are normally defined further in the legislation and are often contradictory since growth management must balance competing objectives.



| <b>Table 8.2.</b><br><b>Growth Management - Goals and Objectives</b> |   |
|--|---|
| <b>State</b>   | <b>Primary Goals and Objectives</b>   |
| Oregon   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Control land-use and protect environmental assets in accordance with specified State goals, through local and county comprehensive plans.</li> </ul>   |
| Florida  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review developments of regional impact to ensure that these local land-use decisions are in the best interest of the region and the state.</li> <li>• Enable delineation of Areas of Critical State Concern to prevent uncontrolled development in these area.</li> </ul>  |
| Maine  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement state land-use, environmental, and economic development goals through local comprehensive plans.</li> <li>• Maintain levels of public services concurrent with growth.</li> </ul>  |
| Vermont  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement state land-use, environmental and economic development goals through coordinated local and regional comprehensive plans.</li> <li>• Change the property tax system to promote agriculture and more equitable economic development.</li> <li>• Establish a consistent and reliable statewide database for land-use planning.</li> </ul> |
| Rhode Island   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement state land-use, economic and environmental goals through local comprehensive plans.</li> <li>• Establish a consistent and reliable statewide database to support local planning.</li> </ul>  |

| <b>Table 8.2. - Continued</b><br><b>Growth Management - Goals and Objectives</b> |  |
|--|--|
| <b>State</b>   | <b>Primary Goals and Objectives</b>  |
| Georgia  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement a State Growth Management Plan through local and regional comprehensive plans.</li> <li>• Establish a consistent and reliable statewide database for land-use planning.</li> </ul>  |
| New Jersey   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement a State Development and Redevelopment Plan encompassing land-use, environmental protection, economic development, housing and public services.</li> <li>• Promote development concurrent with appropriate infrastructure expansions.</li> <li>• Make planning and development more efficient by streamlining regulatory processes.</li> </ul> |
| Washington   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement state land-use, environmental and economic development goals through local comprehensive plans.</li> <li>• Control land-use and protect environmental assets in accordance with specified state goals through local and county comprehensive plans.</li> <li>• Maintain levels of public services concurrent with growth.</li> </ul>          |

Source: Southwestern Pennsylvania Regional Planning Commission 1990, Appendix A & Authors

### 8.3.3. *Growth Management Tools*

As outlined in section 3.5, there are a variety of tools available to achieve the goals and objectives associated with growth management systems. Table 8.3 outlines the primary tools utilized in each of these seven states. The most commonly used tools include: funding for local comprehensive plans; urban growth boundaries; and impact fees.

| <p align="center"><b>Table 8.3.</b><br/><b>Growth Management - Tools</b></p> |  |
|--|--|
| <b>State</b>   | <b>Primary Tools Employed</b>  |
| Oregon   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Urban growth boundaries where dense growth is intended to occur; only rural development is allowed outside of urban growth boundaries.</li> </ul>   |
| Florida  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Impact fees.</li> </ul>   |
| Maine  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Impact fees (authorized only for municipalities with approved comprehensive plans).</li> <li>• Certification program for municipal enforcement officers</li> </ul>                                  |
| Vermont  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Statewide land-use database.</li> <li>• Impact fees (authorized only for municipalities with approved comprehensive plans).</li> </ul>  |
| Rhode Island   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Statewide planning database.</li> </ul>   |
| Georgia  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Statewide planning database.</li> </ul>   |
| New Jersey   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tiered system (defines policy areas).</li> <li>• Regional design system (recommended development options within each tier).</li> <li>• Impact fees (recommended but not yet legislated).</li> </ul> |
| Washington   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited use of impact fees.</li> <li>• Urban growth boundaries define where growth is intended to occur; only rural development is allowed outside boundaries.</li> </ul>                           |

Source: Southwestern Pennsylvania Regional Planning Commission 1990, Appendix A & Authors

#### 8.3.4. *Organizational Principles*

Growth management systems or plans are formulated on a number of organizational principles. These were identified in section 3.6.. Table 8.4 provides a simplified outline of the organizational principles present in each of the seven states. A cursory review of these organizational principles reveals a myriad of variations with respect to citizen participation,

flexibility, hierarchy of plans, regional planning roles, state-local relationship, and inter- and intra-governmental cooperation.

| <b>Table 8.4.</b><br><b>Growth Management - Organizational Principles</b> |  |
|---|--|
| <b>State</b>  | <b>Organizational Principles</b>   |
| Oregon  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explicit state goals in the law.</li> <li>• County and local comprehensive plans, reviewed by the state.</li> <li>• Local regulations must be enacted to implement comprehensive plans.</li> <li>• Regional comprehensive plan for Portland area.</li> <li>• State agencies must observe state goals.</li> </ul>  |
| Florida   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of regional impact system.</li> </ul>   |
| Maine   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local comprehensive plans including the designation of both rural areas and growth areas; local plans reviewed by the State.</li> <li>• Implementation of plans required through local zoning and capital improvement plan.</li> <li>• State agencies must submit biannual reports demonstrating pursuit of state growth management goals.</li> </ul>     |
| Vermont   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regional and local comprehensive plans (local plans not mandatory).</li> <li>• Any local comprehensive plans must be approved by the appropriate regional commission.</li> <li>• State agencies must submit plans for review by the council of regional commissions.</li> <li>• State agency activities must adhere to (approved) local plans.</li> </ul> |

| <b>Table 8.4. - Continued</b><br><b>Growth Management - Organizational Principles</b> |   |
|---|---|
| <b>State</b>  | <b>Organizational Principles</b>  |
| Rhode Island  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explicit land-use goals, standards for housing and infrastructure and comprehensive plan components in the law.</li> <li>• Local comprehensive plans must be approved by the state.</li> <li>• Implementation of comprehensive plans is required through local zoning and other regulations.</li> <li>• State agency activities must adhere to (approved) local plans.</li> </ul>              |
| Georgia   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• State, regional and local comprehensive plans. Local plans reconciled at regional level and regional plans approved by state.</li> <li>• State-level council to coordinate the location of major public facilities.</li> </ul>   |
| New Jersey  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• State plan to be approved through "Cross Acceptance" process involving local and county governments.</li> <li>• State-level monitoring and evaluation to track impact of growth management on economic development, etc.</li> <li>• Coordination of state agency activities that affect planning and development.</li> </ul>   |
| Washington  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• County-wide policy guidelines and local comprehensive plans.</li> <li>• Any local comprehensive plans must be consistent with county-wide policies.</li> <li>• Implementation of plans required through local zoning and capital improvement plans.</li> <li>• No systematic review of plans by the State unless a petition is filed (i.e., plans are assumed valid upon adoption).</li> </ul> |

Source: Southwestern Pennsylvania Regional Planning Commission 1990, Appendix A & Authors

Each of these growth management systems follows a different approach to restricting / accommodating growth. However, the most successful systems invariably fall on the growth accommodating side of the spectrum.

#### 8.4. Washington State's Growth Management Model

The purpose of this section is to provide an overview of the Washington State Growth Management Model. The same analytical framework which was used in the previous section will be used here. This analysis will draw heavily on *The Washington State Growth Management Act: Applicability to British Columbia's Lower Mainland*, an unpublished research paper prepared by the authors (and others) in 1992.

The Washington State legislature passed the Growth Management Act (GMA) in response to uncoordinated and unprecedented population growth in western Washington. The growth management approach taken in Washington is the most comprehensive to date. Washington's Puget Sound region shares many similarities with Greater Vancouver in terms of problems resulting from significant growth pressures. Accordingly, the Washington State Growth Management model will be used as the primary building block for the Greater Vancouver growth management model proposed in Chapter 11.

##### 8.4.1. *Background*

Washington State's growth management model is the most recent and most comprehensive to date. The legislature passed the Growth Management Act in response to unprecedented population growth and urban sprawl which threatened the natural environment, sustainable economic development, and quality of life throughout Washington. The legislation incorporates elements of environmental protection, infrastructure concurrency, state-wide economic development, affordable housing, and containment of sprawling urban development.

Washington's growth management legislation consists of two acts. The *Growth*

*Management Act - House Bill 2929* which was adopted in 1990. This legislation was widely criticized for its failure to provide adequate enforcement provisions and, as a result, was amended by *House Bill 1025* in 1991.

The Act requires state and local governments to prepare, adopt, and implement comprehensive plans in order to effectively manage growth. Over 85% of Washington's 4.9 million people live in the 26 counties and 180 cities preparing plans and regulations under the *Growth Management Act*. The GMA sets a detailed time frame for these urban and rural areas to prepare and submit various plans. To date, 18 counties and 157 cities have met the critical lands protection time requirements and 13 counties have met the July 1992 completion date for county-wide planning policies (Washington Chapter - American Planning Association, 1993, 1).

The effectiveness of the 1991 *Growth Management Act* in attaining significant results is dependent upon the cooperation and coordination of all levels of government as well as the private sector. The following sections will outline the attributes of the system which are useful in the development of a similar system for the Greater Vancouver.

#### 8.4.2. *Goals and Objectives*

The 1990 *Growth Management Act* is an extensive document which encompasses a broad range of social, environmental, and economic considerations pertaining to the management and control of uncoordinated and unplanned growth in the State of Washington.

The goals of the *Growth Management Act*, as outlined in Part 1, Section 2, are intended to provide citizens, communities, local governments, and the private sector with a

common direction in future planning initiatives; direction that had previously been lacking and deficient at the level of both state and local governments. The goals are to be used as a general guide in the development of comprehensive plans and the development of regulations for those jurisdictions which are required (or choose<sup>17</sup>) to plan under the *Act*. The stated goals are as follows:

1. *Urban Growth*. Encourage development in urban areas where adequate public facilities and services exist or can be provided in an efficient manner;
2. *Reduce Sprawl*. Reduce the inappropriate conversion of undeveloped land into sprawling, low-density development;
3. *Transportation*. Encourage efficient multimodal transportation systems that are based on regional priorities and coordinated with county and city comprehensive plans;
4. *Housing*. Encourage the availability of affordable housing to all economic segments of the population of this state, promote a variety of residential densities and housing types, and encourage preservation of existing housing stock;
5. *Economic Development*. Encourage economic development throughout the state that is consistent with adopted comprehensive plans, promote economic opportunity for all citizens of this state, especially for unemployed and for disadvantaged persons, and encourage growth in areas experiencing

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<sup>17</sup> Plan submittal is mandatory for counties of 50,000 or more population where the 1980 to 1990 growth rate was 10 percent or more and for counties of less than 50,000 population where the rate exceeded 20%. Counties with lower growth rates can opt and are encouraged to participate in the growth management program (APA Journal 1992, 425).



insufficient economic growth, all within the capacities of the state's natural resources, public services, and public facilities;

6. *Property Rights.* Private property shall not be taken for public use without just compensation having been made. The property rights of landowners shall be protected from arbitrary and discriminatory actions;
7. *Permits.* Applications for both state and local government permits should be processed in a timely and fair manner to ensure predictability;
8. *Natural Resource Industries.* Maintain and enhance natural resource-based industries, including productive timber, agriculture, and fisheries industries. Encourage the conservation of productive forest lands and productive agricultural lands, and discourage incompatible uses;
9. *Open Space and Recreation.* Encourage the retention of open space and development of recreational opportunities, conserve fish and wildlife habitat, increase access to natural resource lands and water, and develop parks;
10. *Environment.* Protect the environment and enhance the state's high quality of life, including air and water quality, and the availability of water;
11. *Citizen Participation and Coordination.* Encourage the involvement of citizens in the planning process and ensure coordination between communities and jurisdictions to reconcile conflicts;
12. *Public Facilities and Services.* Ensure that those public facilities and services necessary to support development shall be adequate to serve the development at the time the development is available for occupancy and use without decreasing current service levels below locally established minimum

standards; and,

13. *Historical Preservation.* Identify and encourage the preservation of lands, sites, and structures, that have historical or archaeological significance (State of Washington 1990a, 2-3).

The primary objective of the legislation is to "set forth a vision of, and for the future" in the State of Washington (Nwankwo 1992). This requires that uncoordinated and unplanned growth be controlled and managed in an acceptable and sensitive manner. This was deemed necessary by government and the public to ensure that land resources are utilized efficiently and sensibly, environmental integrity is maintained and preserved, future development is sustainable, and the health, safety, and quality of life is maintained (Ibid.).

The GMA is also intended to promote a greater degree of cooperation and coordination in planning matters among all levels of government, the public, and the private sector. Section 43 provides further insight into the intent of the *Act*. Here it is stated that new development and growth should be served by adequate facilities (i.e., concurrency). Provisions are also made in this section to ensure that new growth evolves in an orderly manner by permitting jurisdictions planning under the *Act* to retrieve a proportionate share of the cost of new facilities required to meet the needs directly attributable to new growth and development.

Growth management goals are to be achieved through the promotion of and adherence to the *Act's* 89 sections. Each of these sections addresses specific matters pertaining to implementation, technical procedures, planning, and expected conduct and responsibilities of affected jurisdictions (i.e., those jurisdictions that are required to plan under to *Act* or those that choose to do so on their own accord). A number of the sections

are expected to create direct and forceful impacts on a significant proportion of the state's citizens, local governments, and business interests.

#### 8.4.3. *Growth Management Tools*

The Washington State *Growth Management Act* utilizes a number of tools to achieve the goals and objectives which were outlined above. The most significant of these are outlined below:

1. *Urban Growth Boundaries.* Urban growth boundaries are one of the primary tools utilized in the Washington State model to reduce the inappropriate conversion of land into sprawling development and to ensure the adequate provision of services. Prior to the advent of growth management, the majority of new growth and development had occurred in unincorporated areas which did not have sufficient levels of public services and facilities to meet increased demands. This trend was especially evident in the Puget Sound Region (Washington State 1990 Transportation Policy plan 1989, i).

Section 29 of the act stipulates that counties (in consultation with cities) planning under the Act "shall designate an urban growth area or areas within which urban growth shall be encouraged and outside of which growth can occur only if it is not urban in nature" (State of Washington 1990a, 30). Urban growth boundaries thus also intended to protect rural landscapes, open space and recreational lands. All cities and towns located within a county's boundary are required to consult and reach agreement over the definition of the urban growth boundary. Conflicts regarding the location of boundaries

are to be mediated by the Department of Community Development. Once the location of the boundary is agreed upon, no city or town is permitted to annex land outside of the boundary. Future urban growth is to be restricted to areas that are already characterized by urban growth and have sufficient public facilities and services to meet increased demand or that can be served by a combination of existing services and facilities that can be funded by public or private sources. The extent of the urban growth boundary and permitted densities will be determined through the calculation of twenty year population projections to be completed by the Office of Financial Management. Urban growth boundaries and permitted densities are to be reviewed at least every ten years and, if required, be revised to accommodate an additional twenty years of projected population growth.

2. *Concurrency Requirements / Impact Fees.* The *Growth Management Act* stipulates that public facilities and services be adequate to support the increased population attributable to new development. It further specifies that this must occur without jeopardizing service levels for existing neighbourhoods. This measure ensures that existing residents do not assume an additional financial burden resulting from growth. Critics of the GMA agree that the inclusion of this provision is both positive and necessary.

Section 7(e) of the legislation, entitled "demand management strategies", requires that jurisdictions planning under the *Act* "adopt and enforce ordinances which prohibit development approval if the development causes the level of service on a transportation facility to decline below the standards adopted in the transportation element of the

comprehensive plan, unless transportation improvements or strategies to accommodate the impacts of development are made concurrent with the development" (State of Washington 1990a, 11). More specifically, a financial commitment must be in place to resolve any service deficiencies within six years. While the *Act* defines concurrency in terms of transportation only, local governments are encouraged to extend this requirement to other public facilities (Washington Chapter of the American Planning Association 1993, 4).

Counties and cities planning under the *Act* are permitted to impose fees upon developments "as a condition of development approval to pay for public facilities needed to serve new growth and development (State of Washington 1990, 39). The *Act* places strict controls on the use of impact fees. Prior to their imposition, it must be proven that new developments are reasonably responsible for increased demand for a public facility. The types of public facilities which can be partially funded with impact fees include: streets and roads; parks, open spaces and recreational facilities; schools; and fire protection facilities (Ibid., 39). Prior to the collection of impact fees, facilities must be detailed in the capital facilities plan element of a city or county pre-GMA comprehensive plan or, after July 1, 1993, in their comprehensive and capital facilities plans as required under section 7 of the Act.

Other growth management tools incorporated in the Washington State growth management legislation include: income relocation assistance; provisions for affordable housing; and, economic development.

#### 8.4.4. *Organizational Principles*

As outlined in section 3.6, growth management systems are formulated on a number

of organizational principles including state guidelines; local planning; county and/or regional planning; local plan implementation; integration of state, regional and local plans; participation of state agencies; state funding; and, mechanisms for implementation. It is difficult to dissect a model precisely in this fashion since the categories invariably mesh together. Nevertheless, the major organizational principles contained within the Washington *State Growth Management Act* can be categorized as follows:

1. *State Guidelines.* Explicit land-use goals are contained in state law and must be implemented through standards which are developed and enforced locally (there is no systematic review of plans by the state unless a petition is signed). In short, the State of Washington sets the agenda and allows counties to dictate to the lower level governments.
2. *County / Regional / Local Planning.* Section 7 of the *Growth Management Act* outlines the mandatory elements of all county's and cities comprehensive plans. All local comprehensive plans must be consistent with county-wide policies. The target date for completion of comprehensive plans was July 1, 1993 (data is not yet available on the number of cities and counties meeting this goal). The plans are to use maps and descriptive text describing the objectives, principles and standards used to develop the plans. It is also mandated that the plans be internally consistent and that the public should have a role in their creation. Elements of the plans identified as mandatory include: land-use; housing; capital facilities; utilities; rural land-use; and transportation. The *Act* specifies important factors which must be considered and incorporated into the plan for each of these elements. For example, the

housing element of county and city plans must include inventories and analysis of existing and projected housing needs, statements of goals and objectives, identification of sufficient lands for a wide range of housing types, and assurances that adequate housing is provided for all members of society. All local comprehensive plans must be consistent with county-wide policies.

Explicitly detailing the mandatory elements of comprehensive plans is necessary to ensure state-wide planning efforts and strategies are consistent across, and coordinated between jurisdictions. Individual jurisdictions, operating under the guise of comprehensive planning, frequently promoted planning strategies that produced fragmented and inconsistent results. Prior to the advent of *Growth Management Act*, plans focused on "particular issues (such as land-use, water, sewage, and parks/recreation) with little or no effort to relate them to other issues or concerns" (Washington State 1990 Transportation Policy Plan 1989, i).

3. *Plan Integration.* Consistency of local plans is ensured by counties, and in the Puget Sound Region by the Puget Sound Council.
4. *Participation of State Agencies / Funding.* The Growth Management Division (GMD) of the Washington State Department of Community Development (DCD) was created to help local governments with the implementation of the GMA. It is a provider and coordinator of technical and financial assistance which is available to facilitate local government planning efforts. Each jurisdiction that adopts a comprehensive plan under

the GMA is to report to DCD annually for the first five years (beginning 1991) and every five years thereafter on its progress in implementing GMA requirements (State of Washington 1990b, 461). Grants to counties and cities planning under the Act were \$7.1 million in 1991 (Department of Community Development 1991). The legislature's initial commitment was to fund 50% of local growth management costs. However, during the FY 91-93 biennium, state grants covered approximately 1/3 of local government's growth management costs (Washington Chapter of the American Planning Association 1993, 2).

There will be an increased need for financial and technical assistance between 1993 and 1995 as local governments complete the most difficult part of growth management planning. The Department of Community Development will have increased activity due to the necessity of mediating disputes, reviewing comprehensive plans, etc. State funding is projected to decrease significantly below the current level. Funds must be made available to fully fund the departments future activities.

The Washington State GMA builds on legislation passed in other states. The model can be characterized as a hybrid of the state-dominant, regional-local cooperative and state-local negotiated models outlined in Chapter 3. The mandatory preparation of plans and strong role of counties in ensuring plan consistency is borrowed from state-dominant model whereas the flexibility of only rapidly growing jurisdictions and the decentralization of plan review responsibility are clear reflections of the regional-local cooperative model (i.e., the state may only review and comment on county and local plans).



## 8.5. Hurdles to Implementation

Section 3.7. outlined some common criticisms of growth management legislation. There are several potential problems arising from the implementation of growth management legislation in the State of Washington which follow directly along these lines. The primary hurdles to implementation of the Washington State GMA are briefly described below.

### 8.5.1. *Land Markets*

There is evidence that the imposition of growth controls, especially urban growth boundaries, dramatically alters the normal operations of urban and exurban land markets (Brueckner 1990; Chinitz 1990; Degrove 1984; Pollakowski and Wachter 1990). Morrill (1991) argues that growth boundaries distort supply forces and that this will ultimately lead to increased prices as developable lands outside the boundaries are excluded from future development. Morrill and Hodge (1991) argue that land owners who withhold their properties within urban boundaries for long-term speculative purposes (i.e., they will wait until land prices increase before they release their properties on to the market) are adding to natural inflationary pressures. This practice further limits supplies of developable lands that may be seriously underestimated in the first place. This could happen if it is improperly assumed that all lands within a growth boundary are indeed on the market and/or are developable; however, this is usually not the case. Land markets outside of urban growth boundaries will also be altered.

Distorting land markets will create significant positive and negative impacts, depending on where an individual owns land. William Fischel argues the point that zoning

(i.e., dedication of urban growth boundaries) has "both benefits and costs that are capitalized in property values" (Fischel 1990, 230). Distorted land markets can also be expected to create "winners" and "losers." Winners will be those individuals who withhold lands from the market until prices have risen, at which time "windfall gains" can be accrued (Morrill 1991). Losers are those individuals who have had restrictions placed on their properties located outside the urban boundaries. Growth control restrictions remove the ability of exurban land owners, such as farmers, foresters, and small property owners, to "realize the appreciation of the land, which normally would have occurred" (Morrill 1991, 10). Urban renters and home-buyers will also be affected when inflated land markets distort housing markets. For all of these reasons, Morrill and Hodge (1991, 33) conclude that modifying land markets through growth controls is "socially and economically destructive."

#### 8.5.2. *Housing Affordability*

Empirical studies have shown that a clear relationship exists between growth controls and housing prices. As described by Breuckner, controls that restrict the supply of land "raise housing prices in communities where they are imposed" (Breuckner 1990, 237). Demand for housing would also be disrupted (especially in the Puget Sound region) when adoption of urban growth boundaries, that correspond to higher density requirements, force people into established neighbourhoods previously characterized by lower densities (Morrill 1992). Development impact fees imposed on new residential developments can further inflate housing prices and reduce supplies. In fact, it has been estimated that these fees can add up to \$2,000 to the cost of a home (Morrill 1991).

The cumulative impact of price increases leads to the larger question of housing affordability. Values of existing and new housing could foreseeably be increased so that home-buyers and renters are faced with higher accommodation costs that in some instances may be prohibitive. This was found to be the case in San Diego County, California, where growth controls, coupled with continued rapid population and employment growth, resulted in a "severe housing shortage", especially in the market for single family units (Neuss 1991, 3). Huge price increases were found to "effectively shut first-time homebuyers out of the market for new detached homes" (Ibid., 3). It is possible that if this situation should arise in the Puget Sound region, it could result in a loss of affordable housing options for the urban poor as middle-income families, that could not afford new housing, choose inner-city dwellings as an alternative. This would place these groups in direct competition with each other. Obviously, the poor could not compete and would therefore be displaced and then added to the growing numbers of homeless people (Morrill and Hodge 1991; Neuss 1991).

#### 8.5.3. *Failure of Concurrency*

Provision of infrastructure concurrency in the GMA is generally regarded as positive, yet in the long-term it may not be possible. As noted by Morrill and Hodge (1991, 44), "the existing shortfall of capital expenditures will be used as an excuse to reject future development proposals by imposing moratoria." If this were to happen with respect to residential development, the result would be the further restriction of housing supplies and the exacerbation of affordability problems. Mary McCumber (1992) concurs with this assessment when she predicts that growth areas will eventually have to halt development in order to pay for the anticipated backlog in infrastructure costs. Should these measures

require increases in personal taxes, concurrency, and possibly the entire GMA, would come under attack even though public support for the concept is currently high. Increased personal taxes may be necessary in any event as it is argued that development impact fees "would probably generate less than half the total dollars required to provide the transportation facilities needed to accommodate the share of growth likely to be assigned to the already rapidly urbanizing portions of the state" (Derickson 1990, 4).

#### 8.5.4. *Densification*

Densification is a cornerstone of growth management strategies. It is believed that control of urban sprawl requires the dedication of urban growth boundaries, and following this, the rezoning of land to accept higher residential densities. Although the authors of the GMA prescribed to this concept, others do not feel that intervention in normal market operations will achieve higher densities. Following his analysis of the relationship between land values and density, Breslaw (1990, 464) concluded, "policies that restrict discontinuous development may reduce efficiency in the land market and lead to lower, rather than higher, overall urban density." It is also argued that densification will reduce per capita costs of hard and soft infrastructure; McCumber (1992) regards the establishment of urban boundaries as the principle long-term means of reducing these costs. Once again a formal consensus is not evident as others do not accept that the relationship between infrastructure costs and density is clear-cut. Observers who question this relationship will go so far as to argue that high density development can lead directly to higher per capita costs and that no cost difference exists between various density levels (Audirac et al. 1990; Morrill 1991).

Assuming that high density can actually lead to higher per capita infrastructure

costs, housing prices will eventually be affected. This will happen if developers, faced with higher construction expenses, either pass their additional financial burdens along to the consumer or devote their efforts towards the construction of more expensive housing-types, affordable only to a select clientele. Either response will increase prices, reduce housing supplies and exacerbate affordability concerns. Several other problems could arise with the advent of legislated densification. First, densification that is marked for established, low density communities, will likely generate considerable vocal opposition when residents feel that their lifestyles are threatened. Studies have shown that people prefer low density living because it is closely associated with the North American ideal of single family home ownership and life in the suburbs (Audirac et al. 1990). Densification strategies that result in the mixing of different socioeconomic classes will also produce public outcry (Morrill 1992). In order to ensure that this sort of situation does not arise, it would be necessary not to attempt to push "change" on a community too quickly or insensitively. Finally, densification policies will be criticized if air and water pollution levels increase as a result of increased traffic congestion (assuming people continue to use their automobiles) and the preponderance of impermeable surfaces in urban centres.

#### 8.6. Implications for Growth Management in Greater Vancouver

The foregoing analysis contains some valuable lessons which are potentially useful in the formulation of a growth management model tailored to the economic and political realities of Greater Vancouver. Some of the more notable of these opportunities and constraints are outlined below.

A Greater Vancouver growth management strategy must give expression to a

predefined set of goals and aspirations similar to those articulated in the GVRD *Choosing Our Future* program and the subsequent *Steps to a Livable Region* (GVRD 1990) document. Similar to Washington State, the primary challenge of growth management legislation in the Greater Vancouver is to deliver and implement actions towards livable region goals - primarily to maintain and enhance environmental quality and livability. Any such legislation must consider the following livable region issues: healthy environment; transportation and air quality; land conservation; urban development and urban form; healthy communities; economic health; and, public access to government (Hill 1992).

The deadline system for compliance with provisions contained within the Washington State *Growth Management Act* has been criticized by several organizations. A similar problem may occur in Greater Vancouver. A potential solution is to mandate that jurisdictions demonstrate in their work programs that comprehensive planning remains a very high priority for staff time and other resources.

Urban growth boundaries or a similar mechanism could potentially be a very useful tool in a growth management model utilized in Greater Vancouver. Urban development should be located in urban growth areas where public facilities and services exist or can be efficiently provided. Some of the GVRD member municipalities currently take this approach. However, the majority of the planning work is done in isolation. The GVRD repeatedly forecasts population growth and determines population targets for its member municipalities but lacks the teeth to enforce any of these targets.

In order to be effective, the growth management model adopted for Greater Vancouver must define concurrency for all public facilities including transportation, water utilities, sewer systems, streets, schools, fire protection and recreation facilities.

Additionally, this model must recognize the significant costs involved. A commitment must be made from the provincial, regional and municipal governments to support long-run financial requirements.

Due to Greater Vancouver's considerable growth rate, the supply of public facilities has generally not kept pace with demand. Many communities are finding it increasingly difficult to finance needed public facilities and services due to inflation, urban sprawl, and higher construction standards. The lack of investment in community infrastructure such as roads, water, and sewer service eventually translates into congestion, unsafe conditions, and reduced quality of life. Accordingly, impact fees utilized in a Greater Vancouver growth management model should be expanded to cover other types of facilities which communities are struggling to finance. It is important that such a system assure the fair treatment of developers. For example, developers cannot be charged impact fees to correct past deficiencies. In addition, flexibility must be encouraged so that each community can tailor impact fees and concurrency programs to meet local needs.

Member municipalities of the GVRD prepare plans and policy documents with virtually no guidance from the GVRD (which lacks the authority to enforce guidelines anyway). Cooperation and coordination are, however, written into Washington's growth management legislation and should also be considered a crucial component of any growth management scheme utilized in Greater Vancouver.

The trend in the United States is away from state-dominant systems (i.e., away from top-down systems). New systems in the U.S. must incorporate regional variations, intergovernmental negotiations and local participation based on growth rates. A hybrid model, similar to that employed in Washington State, appears to be the most appropriate

system for Greater Vancouver as well.

Finally, the introduction of a growth management model in Greater Vancouver will likely face hurdles to implementation similar to those experienced in Washington State and will need to identify strategies to address these issues.

#### 8.7. Summary

The development of techniques for formalized growth management systems in the United States and Canada must take place within the existing legal framework. There are a variety of legal issues such as private property rights and eminent domain which must be considered.

Comprehensive growth management models have been introduced in 13 states during the past two decades. The growth management legislation in each of these 13 states has been summarized in Table 5.3.1. In addition, this chapter has outlined the major components for seven growth management programs in the states of Oregon, Florida, Maine, Vermont, Rhode Island, Georgia, New Jersey, and Maine. This brief analysis will be used in the formulation of a growth management model for Greater Vancouver.

The Washington State *Growth Management Act* is the most comprehensive growth management model to date. The legislation, which consists of two acts, requires state and local governments to prepare, adopt, and implement comprehensive plans in order to effectively manage growth. There are a variety of goals associated with this legislation which focus primarily on maintaining and enhancing quality of life throughout the state. The primary tools employed in this model include: urban growth boundaries; concurrency requirements; and, impact fees. This model is formulated on a number of organizational



principles which dictate the jurisdictional level at which plans are prepared, how plans are reviewed, the degree of consistency / integration required, and various funding mechanisms. Potential problems with implementation of the *Act* may lie in the areas of land markets, housing affordability, the failure of concurrency, and densification.

Washington state shares many similarities with British Columbia's Greater Vancouver region in terms of growth pressures and challenges to maintain a declining quality of life. Both of these locations are still viewed as extremely attractive destinations to the rest of North America and the world and both continue to attract thousands of people each year. There are a number of principles which can be borrowed from the Washington State growth management model for use in Greater Vancouver. The later model will incorporate many of the goals, tools, and organizational principles utilized in the Washington State *Growth Management Act* and will improve on certain components with the extension of concurrency and impact fee requirements and the incorporation of a more flexible deadline system. Greater Vancouver's model will likely face similar hurdles to implementation and, as a result, must prescribe strategies to address these problems.

## CHAPTER 9

### LAND PLANNING AND GROWTH MANAGEMENT: THE CANADIAN CONTEXT

#### 9.1. Introduction

Over the last five decades Canadian rural and urban land resources have been placed under considerable pressures from distinctive, but interrelated, forces of change. The magnitude and complexity of these pressures become evident when an inventory of contributing factors is assembled: rapid population growth and urbanization; uncontrolled land speculation; rapid economic growth and industrialization; individual lifestyle preferences and property rights; proliferation of the use of the private automobile; advances in infrastructure and communications technology; and, the lack of forceful and effective control mechanisms (Bryant, Russwurm, and McClellan 1982; Hodge 1991; Richardson 1989; Russwurm 1977). These forces can be reduced into four broad areas of concern:

1. Land-use, ownership, and conversion conflicts;
2. Loss and degradation of agricultural lands and natural resources;
3. Social issues; and,
4. Effective management (Bryant, Russwurm, and McClellan 1982; Russwurm 1977).<sup>18</sup>

Though complex, these problems have not gone unchecked as Canadian

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<sup>18</sup> For a detailed discussion of land-related issues pertaining to British Columbia's Lower Mainland, see Chapter 5.0 - Making a Case for Growth Management in Greater Vancouver.

governments and academia have expended considerable effort towards the use, management, planning and preservation of land resources. For the most part their actions and contributions have been useful and effective although the scope of their investigations and programs have often been narrowly focused on a limited number of objectives pertaining to particular critical areas of concern.

This myopic approach has resulted in the failure to seriously explore the utility and practicality of comprehensive land-use programs and strategies (i.e., growth management programs that systematically encompass the economic, environmental, and social functions of land) beyond a modest amount of academic inquiry. In two Canadian jurisdictions, Metropolitan Toronto and the Greater Vancouver Regional District,<sup>19</sup> the concept of growth management has progressed beyond research and discussion to a point where it is viewed as a viable, albeit not without shortcomings, vehicle to effectively address regional land-use and growth problems.

These illustrations are, however, the exception rather than the rule as the majority of Canadian governments with responsibility for the planning and management of land resources continue to feature narrowly defined programs that utilize traditional land-use planning strategies, policies, instruments, and administrative structures to address increasingly complex and troublesome land and growth issues.

The objective of this chapter is to determine if the Canadian experience with land-use planning can serve as a foundation for the future development and implementation of comprehensive growth management programs. This will be accomplished by reviewing the

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<sup>19</sup> Although neither of these programs have been explicitly labelled as growth management they do exhibit the basic characteristics of these types of programs.

theory and practice of land-use planning, existing administration structures, common planning initiatives, and commonly used implementation instruments and methods. An indepth review of the experiences of Metro Toronto with growth management will complete this analysis. Valuable knowledge can be gained from an intensive inquiry of Metro Toronto's leading role in addressing growth issues on a broad geographic scale. An evaluation of the effectiveness of Metro's political and administrative structures in implementing and sustaining a comprehensive growth management program in a complex, populous, and politically fragmented region will be particularly insightful.

## 9.2. Canadian Land-Use Planning In Theory and Practice

Implementation of land-use policies and directives at the provincial, regional, and local levels requires the application of goal-achieving instruments and mechanisms. Administrative structures are also necessary for the determination, delivery and implementation of policy. In Canada, experiences with land-use planning and management from the past 50 years have shown that a common set of tools, mechanisms, and administrative structures have been utilized. Policy modifications and the selection of particular implementation vehicles reflect public attitudes towards government intervention, knowledge and experience of planning organizations, the degree of veneration afforded to private property rights, and the type and complexity of land-use issues under consideration (Bryant, Russwurm, McClellan 1982).

In this section, common implementation instruments and methods, and administrative structures will be reviewed and evaluated. First, a brief examination of the theory and practice of land-use planning in Canada is presented.

A literature review reveals a multitude of land-use planning definitions, each reflecting the philosophical position of its author, whether that be a market orientation or otherwise. Perhaps the most valuable definition is provided by Hok (1989, 1) where he states that "land-use planning is defined as the process of protecting and improving the living, production and recreation environments in a city through the proper use and development of land." This is a useful definition because it accurately acknowledges that land serves many functions that are often in direct conflict with each other and which, when combined, place considerable demands upon it. Under these conditions land-use planning represents the mechanism that determines a "proper use and development" for land that secures a balance between these demands.

The underlying objective, and indeed the justification for land-use planning, is advancing the "public interest" (Ibid., 5). This also represents the most difficult aspect of the planning process, since universal definitions of terms such as "proper" and "public interest" are difficult to develop as each stakeholder, including governments and private-property owners, possess unique interpretations that reflect their own interests, values, and beliefs. Furthermore, land-use planning is not equipped with a "set formula" or "recipe" that can be applied to every problem and/or issue in every situation (Richardson 1989). Individual problems require unique strategies and programs that are tailored to reflect prevailing conditions, availability and effectiveness of means, and expected costs. Solutions cannot be extracted from one situation and applied to another and still achieve a result that satisfies all involved parties.

As the complexity of urban, and exurban, environments have increased, the practice of land-use planning has evolved so that a substantial number of specific objectives are

actively pursued. These objectives, which can collectively be referred to as public interest elements, include: health and safety; convenience; efficiency; social equity; environmental quality; energy conservation; visual amenity; and, the provision of public amenities (Courtney 1983; Bryant, Russwurm and McClellan 1982; Hodge 1991; Hok 1989). The issues presented in this list indicate the parameters in which most land-use planning activities fall, including those initiated in Canada.

In the context of controlling and managing urban and population growth, three of these objectives -- environmental quality, social equity, and efficiency -- assume greater significance. In the past, environmental objectives were narrowly focused on "routine" hazards such as floods, soil erosion, and landslides. In response to the public's growing awareness and concern about the degradation of the global environment, the scope of environmental considerations has commensurately expanded to include air and water quality, the preservation and conservation of natural habitats and prime agricultural lands, and the siting of waste treatment facilities and landfill sites (Hok 1989). The scope of social-equity objectives has similarly been extended so that concerns of "who pays and who benefits" supplement traditional concerns of equal opportunity and access (Ibid.).

Of perhaps greatest significance is the objective of efficiency. In the context of growth management and control, efficiency refers to the "guiding development and redevelopment of land to more desirable purposes, limiting urban sprawl and unnecessary encroachment on agricultural land, and achieving economies of scale and least-cost production of public services" (Courtney 1983, 153-54). Planning strategies that attempt to increase the efficiency of land-use are, in effect, seeking to lower the costs attributable to the urban development process while, at the same time, increasing the benefits arising from

it. Land-use planning aimed at increasing efficiency is therefore concerned with developing "the 'right' land in the 'right' place at the 'right' time" (Bryant, Russwurm, McClellan 1982, 195).

The practice of land-use planning in Canada can best be described as responsive to the complexity and scope of contemporary urban issues. In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, land-use planning had a narrow focus that reflected the relative simplicity of that era's issues. Without belying their contributions, planning practitioners were primarily concerned with siting and locational issues (e.g., the efficient layout of streets, and the location of transportation corridors for streetcars and railways) and the control of nuisances (i.e., the control and isolation of noxious by-products of industry and commerce). Although limited in scope and perspective, the needs of urban populations were, in general, well served by this bare-bone approach until the period immediately following the Second World War. At this time, urban centres underwent rapid transformations as a result of population growth, high economic productivity, and the proliferation of the private automobile. These changes created new and increasingly complex land-use problems that necessitated the further maturation and refocusing of the planning profession. For example, as a result of the pursuit of the ideal country lifestyle large numbers of people sought accommodation in areas other than the traditional built-up areas. The rise of the "suburb," in combination with the increased ownership and use of the automobile, necessitated theoretical and technological innovations in the realm of transportation. These, and other complex economic and social problems, stimulated the transformation of the entire theoretical foundation of land-use planning from a localized, "community" planning to that of a broad-based "metropolitan" perspective. Under these

new regime, the over-riding concern of planning practitioners became the attainment of a balance between the numerous, interrelated, and often contradictory, planning issues that characterized the "metropolis" (Hodge 1991).

Today, the land-use planning issues confronted by Canadian jurisdictions are as extensive and diverse as the county's landscape. Although each region and local area is confronted by unique problems reflecting local conditions, the existence of "recurring themes" -- such as urbanization -- that are not geographically localized make it possible to assemble a list of common issues (Bryant 1989, 178). A partial list, which corresponds to the basic objectives and public interest elements of land-use planning recounted previously in this chapter, includes:<sup>20</sup> land conversion; use; ownership and fragmentation; urban growth and sprawl; land and the natural environment; agricultural land; quality of life; water and air resources; waste management; and, natural heritage and natural habitat (Bryant, Russwurm, and McClellan 1982; Gertler, Lord, and Stewart 1975; Hilts and Fitzgibbon 1989; Russwurm 1977). The quantity and diversity of this list adequately demonstrates the difficulties in attaining a balance.

The components of the previous list clearly indicate that the environment and related issues have gained considerable attention within the realm of land-use planning. In response to this, and to the public's growing environmental awareness and concern about

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<sup>20</sup> Although the previous discussion has focused on urban land-use planning, many current issues are associated with exurban or urban-fringe lands. The urban fringe is defined as the lands immediately surrounding an urban area that extend for up to 48 km (30 miles) from its built-up edge (Bryant, Russwurm, and McClellan 1982; Russwurm 1977). The predominant uses encountered on these lands are either agricultural or recreational, although large portions of the fringe may be found in relatively natural states. The fringe is seriously threatened by increasing, and generally uncontrolled, encroachment from urban-type land uses. This is of considerable concern because highly productive agricultural lands are threatened as is the broader environmental well-being of the region. In recent years, protection of the urban fringe has been given high government priority, however, successes have not always been evident.



the negative impact of human activities on the earth's ecology, the concept of sustainable development has evolved. The essence of this concept is precisely communicated in the following definition: "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (World Commission on Environment and Development 1987, 43).<sup>21</sup> The key feature of sustainable development is the acknowledgment that although economic growth is required to meet the world's economic needs, it nevertheless has limits which necessitate that it must be pursued "within the constraints imposed by the overriding imperative of preserving a lasting, sustaining habitat for humanity" (Richardson 1989, 4).

Land use, and land-use planning, have a direct impact on sustainability. Many of the unsustainable characteristics of contemporary urban environments -- for example, urban sprawl and its many negative consequences -- are attributable to inappropriate land-use planning strategies and programs and their resultant land-use patterns (Rees and Roseland 1991). But rather than detract from sustainability, land-use planning can play a significant role in its attainment. Without entirely overhauling or refocusing the practice of land-use planning, it has the ability to promote sustainability via a number of routes, such as promoting the efficient use of land, optimizing the allocation of renewable resources, protecting lands, resources and unique topographic features, resolving competing demands for lands, encouraging and facilitating environmentally-sound economic development, and promoting sustainable urban development (Richardson 1989, 38). As well, much of the

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<sup>21</sup> Canada's National Task Force on Environment and Economy has developed a definition of "sustainable economic development" which closely resembles the Brundtland Commission's in scope and perspective: "sustainable economic development, which we generally define as development which ensures that the utilization of resources and the environment today does not damage prospects for their use by future generations" (National Task Force on Environment and Economy 1987, 3).

associated administrative structures, legal powers, and professional and academic expertise required to attain sustainable land-use planning already exist, although they may not necessarily be fully developed nor fully utilized.

For land-use planning to achieve its full potential in advancing sustainability an important change in perception and attitude towards land must occur. Western societies that espouse the virtues of the free market universally regard land as a commodity to be bought and sold in the market place. Ultimately, this attitude has led to undesirable consequences that can only be reversed if land is recognized as being "fundamental to all forms of life, to social organization, and to economic activity" (Ibid., 4-5).

The number of complex land-use problems facing Canadian society is daunting. The theoretical foundations and adaptive qualities of land-use planning suggest that it has the potential to effectively address these problems. This is unlikely, however, because at its core, land-use planning is merely a "tool" that is "employed as society dictates and which can only be as effective as society permits" (Ibid., 6). To achieve its full potential and a higher degree of effectiveness, relatively radical transformations and reforms must occur in critical spheres outside the theoretical domain of land-use planning, such as those involving public and business attitudes, policy and policy-making, and administration and institutional structures and processes (Ibid.). This will be difficult if not impossible to attain in either the long- or short-term since each of these are notoriously averse to either manipulation or alteration.

### 9.3. The Administrative Structure of Canadian Land-Use Planning

In Canada, land-use planning is primarily the responsibility of provincial and local

governments. Although all land-use planning powers are legally held by the provinces, they have preferred to delegate some of their powers to municipal governments "in an effort to improve the quality and effectiveness of provincial land-planning frameworks" (Audet and Le Henaff 1983, 20). Municipal governments are nonetheless allotted ample powers to maintain a highly visible and prominent position within the realm of Canadian land-use planning. The level of powers held by intermunicipal bodies (i.e., regional governments) can vary considerably given that they are relatively recent creatures of the provinces and therefore do not have an established tradition of governance and planning similar to local bodies. Furthermore, the level of funding, support, and guidance afforded to them is dependent on the volition of the provinces and constituent municipalities.

In this section the administrative structure of Canadian land-use planning will be reviewed, emphasizing the powers, scope of involvement, and the effectiveness of the federal government, the provinces, and regional and local authorities. This analysis will be used to determine if Canadian land-use planning experiences can adequately serve as the foundation for the development of successful, integrated growth management programs.

#### 9.3.1. *The Federal Government*

The *British North America Act, 1867 (B.N.A. Act)*, the source of all planning-related powers in Canada, does not explicitly define land-use planning powers for the federal government. The federal government can, however, be considered a major participant in planning-related activities when one takes into account the influence and leverage of the Commission of Conservation, and the Central/Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation and some of its delegated powers -- from the *B.N.A. Act* -- that can

be legally interpreted as "indirect" land-use powers. These include powers pertaining to national defense (section 91(7)), transportation and communication (section 92(10)(a)), agriculture (section 95), and, as defined in section 91, the authority "to make Laws for the Peace, Order, and good Government of Canada" (*British North America Act, 1867*). Control over the use of lands under its jurisdictional authority (such as airports, railways, and harbours) supplies the federal government with additional influence in land-planning matters.

The 1982 Canadian Constitution, which is firmly grounded in the principles of the *B.N.A. Act*, further refines federal powers relating to land by recognizing Parliament as the nation's lone "Sovereign" and therefore its solitary land owner. As a result of this determination, private citizens that hold "title" to land do not have the right nor power to absolutely control the manner in which their land is used. This interpretation essentially endows Parliament, and all of its official delegates, unlimited authority to "demand reasonable land-use on the part of its citizen-tenants" (Hodge 1991, 107).

The federal government does not operate within a vacuum as it is expected to fully comply with the land-use laws and regulations of junior governments. Exceptions to this broad edict exist including those instances where "they (provincial and local laws and regulations) are inconsistent with competent federal legislation or impair the essential capacities of the enterprises" (Ince 1977, 13). In situations where federal laws are in direct conflict with either local or provincial land-use laws or regulations, the relevant federal statutes are deemed supreme and subsequently assume precedence over the conflicting laws or regulation. These are not invalidated, rather, they are determined to be "inoperative to the extent of the conflict" (Ibid., 14).

### 9.3.2. *The Provinces*

The jurisdictional powers which permit the provinces to undertake planning activities also originate from the B.N.A. Act. The broadly-worded sections 92(13) and 92(16)<sup>22</sup> essentially guarantee the provinces "exclusive legislative jurisdiction over the general regulation and control of land-use" (Interdepartmental Task Force on Land-Use Policy 1980, 41). Ownership of vast tracts of territory<sup>23</sup> and near monopolistic ownership of mineral resources, further solidifies the province's control over land-use planning. As noted above, the provinces hold the majority of the land-use planning powers.

Even though they have preferred to delegate many of their powers to local governments, and to a lesser extent to regional governments, the provinces still retain sufficient amounts of power to be considered a major "player" in land planning matters. However, a failure on part of most of the provinces to utilize their powers in an effective manner has led to much criticism in the past. Since the 1970s, the provinces have begun to reassert themselves by increasing their land-use planning roles and responsibilities.

In an attempt to maintain uniformity of planning services, the provinces have retained control over the strategic and control functions of land-use planning including the responsibility of determining long- and short-term goals and objectives. Generally, they assume a supervisory role, and when circumstances dictate, an adjudicating role.

An important provincial responsibility is enacting and/or amending enabling

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<sup>22</sup> Section 92(13) pertains to the provincial regulation of property and civil rights whereas section 92(16) describes powers relating to local and private matters (Ince 1977; Interdepartmental Task Force on Land-Use Policy 1980).

<sup>23</sup> Section 92(5) clearly indicates that the provinces have complete control over the lands that they own (Bannister, DeVerteuil, Heintz, and Patrinick 1992).

legislation -- generically referred to as "planning acts" -- which authorize lower tiers of government to undertake planning activities. These acts ordinarily detail five fundamental components of government-initiated planning: creation of planning units; establishment of organizational structures; components and adoption strategies for plans; procedures for enacting bylaws; and, procedures for land subdivision (Hodge 1991). The provinces, which oversee these activities, are also responsible for approving local and regional plans and land-use regulations -- such as zoning and subdivision controls -- establishing guidelines and standards for dealing with unique planning issues that may have provincial or national ramifications, and designating development areas and approving corresponding plans (Audet and Le Henaff 1984; Province of Nova Scotia 1991).

As of 1991, only the provinces of Nova Scotia, Manitoba, Ontario, Prince Edward Island, and Saskatchewan, had enabled land-use legislation (in the form of Planning Acts) (Province of Nova Scotia, Department of Municipal Affairs 1991). Of these, only Manitoba and Ontario had progressed to the point of actually developing supporting policies.<sup>24</sup> Similarly, only Manitoba and Nova Scotia have established special-purpose committees to participate in the development of land-use policies. Implementation of policies is primarily the responsibility of municipal governments through local plans and bylaws. To ensure successful and effective implementation in each of the noted provinces, locally-adopted plans must be officially approved by the province on the basis of conformity to the umbrella provincial policy. In Nova Scotia, Manitoba, and Saskatchewan, the provincial

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<sup>24</sup> In Manitoba, policies address both development and infrastructure considerations, while in Ontario the policies address resources and the environment. The remaining provinces which have not developed specific policies, are not restricted in the scope of the policies that they could develop to support their enabled land-use legislation. In most instances, the provinces are free to develop any type of land-use policies that have could be interpreted as being of provincial interest (Province of Nova Scotia, Department of Municipal Affairs 1991).

government even has the power of requiring municipalities "to prepare and adopt municipal plans and bylaws" (Ibid., 17).

In some critical areas of concern, the provinces have increased their role and degree of involvement in response to lower-level governments that may not have the desire, delegated powers, nor resources to effectively deal with complex, high-profile and sensitive issues. The most visible areas where the provinces have expanded their roles and responsibilities are:

1. Preservation of valuable and productive agricultural lands;
2. Protection of areas of critical environment concern that are characterized by physical or historical value, or are aesthetically or ecologically unique; and,
3. Regulation of areas affected by major public facilities including highways, airports, universities, power installations, and irrigation projects (Robinson 1977, 170-173).

Growing concern about the state of the environment, and the consequences of urban growth and sprawl has also precipitated many provincial governments to increase their involvement in the control, management, and protection of fringe lands. While it can be argued that local governments have the abilities to undertake this task, the provinces have nevertheless assumed a highly visible position.

Considerable variation exists between provinces with regard to the degree of involvement in these land-use issues, and the effectiveness of their strategies and initiatives. The parameters of provincial involvement are, however, relatively standardized across the country. The following list captures the breadth of the land-use planning, management, and control activities commonly undertaken by provincial governments:

1. Establishing legislative authority and providing financial assistance for "land-banking programmes" designed to control the timing and location of development and to ensure a supply of relatively inexpensive, serviced land for development, and to recapture a share of land speculation and wind-fall profits for the public;
2. Creating "restricted development areas" where land-use and development are strictly controlled in order to protect the natural and man-made environments and to prevent environmental degradation in sensitive or unique areas;
3. Introducing comprehensive tax legislation (e.g., taxes on capital gains from the sale of land) increases in land values to control speculation;
4. Enacting legislation to reduce monopolistic or oligopolistic ownership of developable lands;
5. Passing legislation to restrict the foreign ownership of land by individuals or large corporations including controls on the leasing of privately-held lands by foreign nationals; and,
6. Controlling the sale of crown lands to either foreign nationals and Canadian citizens and designating certain crown lands as "critical areas" for their sustained protection (Robinson 1977, 173-176; Ironside 1984).

The dramatic rise in the provincial involvement in land-use planning since the 1970s can be regarded as a positive development since complex, interjurisdictional land-use issues necessarily require the direct involvement of senior governments which can provide a comprehensive perspective that local governments are not always capable of, nor willing to, offer. But given that the complexity of these types of issues are not decreasing, ample



evidence exists to suggest that the provinces must assume an increasingly prominent position and continue to reassert their presence and involvement in land-use planning matters (Robinson 1977).

Even if circumstances dictate that this would be a responsible avenue for provincial governments to pursue, it is unlikely to materialize given their unwillingness or hesitancy to introduce province-wide, land-use planning because of the potential political repercussions and because "politicians also tend to be averse to any kind of long-term plan which restricts their ability to make extempore decisions" (Richardson 1989, 39). Although several provinces have progressed to the point of enabling land-use legislation, the failure to develop implementation policies represents a severe deficiency. Without both legislation and implementation policies, the provinces are essentially limiting themselves to position of reacting to land crisis rather than guiding the development and use of land in a proactive, effective, and efficient manner (Russwurm 1977).

### 9.3.3. *Regional Authorities*

Regional, or intermunicipal, governments, are relatively recent innovations intended to address complex, interjurisdictional issues affecting broad geographic areas. Predominantly, they address problems arising from urbanization, unequal rates of economic growth<sup>25</sup> between and within provinces, and environmental degradation resulting from pollution and technology (Coppack and Russwurm 1988).

Regional governments were originally conceptualized as a progressive response to

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<sup>25</sup> It should be noted that one of regional government's primary activities, besides land planning and the provision of other services, is economic development. Indeed, many of the early examples of regional planning in Canada -- and in other countries -- focused on the economic development of rural areas.

rapid urban growth and expansion that characterized the years immediately following World War II. Specifically, regional planning was viewed as the mechanism which would control the phenomena of suburbanization that had produced haphazard urban development patterns. The underlying purpose of regional governments was to "exercise authority under provincial stature to shape the form and quality of the regional environment by regulatory means, such as land-use plans and zoning bylaws, by planning a system of transportation and services, and by entering actively into the development process" (Gertler, Lord, and Stewart 1975, 73). Since their formative years, Canadian regional governments have seen their mandates expanded to assume broad social, economic, and physical planning activities; many have also seen their mandates restricted.

In effect, regional governments serve as the "representatives" of the provinces in planning-related endeavours involving constituent municipalities (Hok 1989).<sup>26</sup> To fulfil this role they are given the responsibility of developing and implementing their own plans, and in some cases, assisting in the development of plans for area planning agencies. It is also customary for regional authorities to establish and administer an approvals process and promote public participation (Audet and Le Henaff 1983; Hodge 1991). Some regional authorities are also given powers for establishing major public facilities such as hospitals, highways, transit, water and sewer, and parks. When they do not have sufficient powers to achieve desired objectives, regional governments often resort to lobbying their political masters, the provinces. This is an especially common occurrence in the case of decision-

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<sup>26</sup> For example, Alberta regional governments operate under the "principle of cooperative and collective action", while in Ontario, they assume the task of regionalizing "provincial administrative functions" (Gertler, Lord, and Stewart 1975, 78).

making involving land development (Hodge 1991).

Although regional governments were created with high expectations, their performance and level of achievement has often been less than satisfactory. There are a number of reasons for this evaluation, including limited power bases from which to operate, and the lack of dependable "policy guidance and coordinative help from the provinces" (Gertler, Lord, and Stewart 1975, 82). Compounding these problems are insufficient resources, monetary and human, to effectively utilize available powers, thereby decreasing the effectiveness and successfulness of regional initiatives, policies, and programs (Wolfe and Matthews-Glenn 1992).

Additional problems plaguing regional governments stem from the retention of the bulk of decision-making powers in the hands of local government. Without some degree of control over local matters, regional governments are effectively relegated to an advisory role that severely restricts their ability to attain broader goals and objectives of regional significance.<sup>27</sup> This situation has, more often than not, resulted in considerable tensions between local and regional bodies that are inherently political in nature and therefore difficult to alleviate unless adequate forums for reconciliation exist (Hodge 1991). The inequitable and confusing distribution of planning powers creates further problems between regional and local governments, resulting in conflicts, competition, contradictory actions, and a lack of coordination and cooperation (Bourne 1984). A lack of coordination leads to additional problems of the unequitable distribution of costs and benefits among regions and member municipalities. Finally, objectives of plans and policies are often difficult to

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<sup>27</sup> Two exceptions to this generalization are Winnipeg, Manitoba and Saskatoon, Saskatchewan where the regional bodies, Unicity in the case of former and the Meewasin Valley Authority in the case of later, have control over local land-use planning functions (Hodge 1991).

realize because regional governments that do not have strong and clear powers are forced to rely on consensus and compromise with local governments. Often, these are weak and do not allow for successful policy or plan implementation.

A third criticism of regional planning bodies pertains to "boundary definition." Often, regional administrative structures have not expanded to match the growing complexity and scale of regional problems, especially those concerned with population growth and development. The practice of creating additional regional bodies on the peripheries of these areas has not proven effective (Bourne 1984; Coppack and Russwurm 1988).<sup>28</sup>

#### 9.3.4. *Local Authorities*

Although the planning powers and responsibilities of local governments are strictly defined by the provinces, it has become customary to permit local authorities to make the majority of the planning and development decisions within their jurisdictional boundaries. Local authorities are best suited to this task, and more capable of making informed decisions, as their "closeness" to issues gives them a heightened awareness and sensitivity towards local circumstances and access to better and clearer information about public perceptions and sentiments (Robinson 1977).

The primary responsibility of municipal governments is the development, implementation, and amendment of plans (i.e., local or community plans). Although plans

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<sup>28</sup> A good example of this problem occurred in Toronto Region during the 1970s when growth pressures induced the provincial government to establish four new regional governments in the suburbs instead of expanding the boundaries of the already established Metro Toronto governmental body. The result of this action has been regional fragmentation, lack of coordinated planning activities among regional governments, and therefore, ineffectual regional planning (Bourne 1991).

can address a broad range of planning and community concerns, they are usually focused on four fundamental features of the physical environment: living districts; working districts; community facilities; and, circulation (Hodge 1991). Implementation of community plans is accomplished through a number of tools including zoning, subdivision controls, and construction, occupancy and maintenance standards (Audet and Le Henaff 1983).

Being at the forefront of much of the planning and decision-making undertaken within Canada makes local governments a focus for criticism. As a whole, they are perceived as exhibiting several major flaws, many of which arise from their reluctance to permit restrictions on their autonomy, and second, their limited perspective. These include: susceptibility to short-term political reaction; inability to develop plans which are compatible with and coordinated with other local plans; failure to recognize and incorporate negative externalities; and, inability to formulate and implement effective long-term policy (Bryant, Russwurm, and McClellan 1982). A partial explanation for local government's inability to develop and implement long-term policy is a near universal fixation on a limited number of local preoccupations including growth, an expanding assessment base, road and transit needs, servicing costs, and a steadfast belief in the sanctity of private property rights (Bryant, Russwurm, and McClellan 1982; Richardson 1989, 10). It is these limitations which have incited some provincial governments to expand their land-planning roles and responsibilities, and in some cases, to create an additional layer of government -- that is, intermunicipal or regional governments.

Contemporary Canadian land-use planning and administrative structures appear, on the surface, to provide a solid foundation on which to construct a comprehensive growth management program. Regional governments represent the most practical and useful level

of government to serve this purpose. Their current form and structure, however, requires modifications and augmentations to offset several limitations which curtail their overall effectiveness. Achievement of a level of success commensurate with their capabilities necessitates strengthened enabling legislation, expansion of basic powers, and most importantly, greater provincial support and guidance. The provinces will have to increase their level of involvement and responsibility in land-use planning, irregardless of the potential for negative political repercussions -- at minimum they must provide regional governments with more and stronger powers, and develop policy guidelines indicating how planning powers are divided between regional and local bodies. The primary obstacle to overcome is the autonomous nature of local government which encourages narrowly-focused planning perspectives, and the promotion of growth as the principle method of enhancing their tax base. This will have to be replaced by a broader, long-term perspective that tolerates coordination and cooperation with contiguous municipal governments, and regional and provincial authorities.

#### 9.4. Implementation Instruments and Methods

Land-use goals and objectives are realized through the application of specific implementation instruments and methods. Government authorities have an extensive array of these from which to choose, ranging from the familiar and relatively simple (e.g., zoning and subdivision controls) to the elaborate and uncommon (e.g., public land banking and green belts). The selection of appropriate instruments and methods is critical if stated land-use goals and objectives are to be achieved. In this context, appropriateness implies past experiences, effectiveness (i.e., previous successes or failures), financial implications,

political and public support, and the nature of the issue(s) under consideration.

Each instrument and method falls into one of three categories: "incentives" designed to achieve more efficient use of land; "restrictions" to control or direct land-use and development activities; and, "management improvements" which increase the efficiency of incentives or restrictions (Courtney 1983, 154). Government authorities have traditionally relied upon restrictive instruments and methods since these permit the highest level of direct and indirect control over private land development (in relation to either developed or undeveloped land) and decision making (Hodge 1991).

In this section, some of the more popular and widely used implementation instruments and methods will be introduced, briefly described, and evaluated.

#### 9.4.1. *Development Controls*

Development controls, also termed "site plan controls" or "development permits" refer to permitting systems which require the proponents of a development to consult with appropriate authorities to establish the "allowable conditions" for the project (Ibid., 231). The system is designed to ensure that proposed developments, buildings, or subdivisions are consistent with the plans. Specifically, the permitting system examines, on a case-by-case basis, the siting of buildings, design and appearance, relationship with surrounding development, and its relation to streets.

For planners and other authorities the use of development controls is particularly valuable as it allows for direct negotiations with developers and the ability to influence the final form and design of their developments. Most importantly, development controls serve to link zoning with plans (Ibid.).

#### 9.4.2. *Development Cost Charges*

Development cost charges (DCCs) are levied on new developments to ensure that they do not overburden existing infrastructure, services, facilities and public amenities (e.g., sewage and water, schools, public transportation systems, and roads and parking networks). In many Canadian jurisdictions, DCCs are often used to purchase public open space to supplement private space provided with new developments, and other public amenities.

The justification for DCCs, or concurrency programs as they are often termed, is based on the assumption that existing facilities, infrastructure, and services can only serve established development. Additional development, which places increased demand on these public assets, necessitates large financial allocations to boost service levels to a higher level (Morrill 1991).

DCCs have proven to be effective mechanisms to ensure that the costs arising from new development are borne by the property owners and not by existing residents. Hence, this is a tool that ensures for the equitable distribution of costs attributable to growth. Difficulties appear when past expenditures on infrastructure, services, etc. were insufficient to match actual investment requirements. As a result, a fiscal crisis unfolds making it difficult to improve or expand services to match actual demand. If these situations materialize, Morrill and Hodge (1991, 44) argue that "the existing shortfall of capital expenditures will be used as an excuse to reject future development proposals by imposing moratoria." This scenario is unlikely, however, if investments in system improvements are maintained at a consistent level and are equal to actual requirements.



#### 9.4.3. *Green Belts*

Green belts refer to land where development is either strictly regulated or entirely eliminated in order to control or contain the form and direction of urban growth (Spurr 1976). An urban core area, located somewhere within the boundaries of the green belt, receives the majority of future growth and development, and if required, additional growth, which is carefully controlled, is channelled into satellite areas outside the green belt.<sup>29</sup> Besides growth control and containment, green belts can serve other functions including preserving prime agricultural lands, preserving rural character, and recreation (Bryant, Russwurm, McClellan 1982).

The primary problem associated with green belts is "leap frog" development which occurs when insufficient land supplies are available in designated satellite nodes to meet demand primarily attributable to housing development. In situations where the green belt ineffectively contains urban growth, satellite nodes are either unavailable or provide an insufficient supply of developable land. A common outcome of this scenario is an affordable housing crisis arising from inflated local and/or regional housing markets (Spurr 1976). Another concern relates to the determination of appropriate and acceptable uses which maintains the integrity of green belts and continues to satisfy the public's expectations. Additionally, the inability or failure of government landlords to carefully monitor permitted uses may result in the erosion of the integrity of the green belt.

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<sup>29</sup> This arrangement mirrors the green belt experiences of Ottawa, Ontario. Originally conceived of in the 1950s, green belts were established through the direct purchase or expropriation of approximately 41,390 acres by the federal government. Growth and development was to be directed towards the core, in this case Ottawa, while future developments were to be located outside the green belt along major "approach corridors" (Spurr 1976, 87-88).

#### 9.4.4. *Plans*

Plans, which are the basic planning instrument, come in many different forms, each with a specific purpose in mind, including: controlling or managing physical development on undeveloped land; managing special or environmentally sensitive areas; dealing with basic functional elements of cities (e.g., transportation, infrastructure, services, open space, housing); and, determination of broad-scale land-use patterns (Hodge 1991; Audet and Le Henaff 1984). The comprehensive plan, which represent a consolidation of these elements within a single document, serves as a broad-based, long-range, general policy guide for the future physical development of a community and the relationships between their major function elements (Hodge 1991).

According to Hodge (Ibid., 207), the four essential features of community plans are:

1. Focusing on the core elements of the physical environment including living and working precincts, community facilities and infrastructure, and transportation networks;
2. Forward-looking (either long- or short-term);
3. Comprehensive in perspective allowing consideration of non-physical issues such as parks and recreation, economic development, heritage preservation, and any number of social issues; and,
4. General and broad based so as to guide decision-making rather than to prescribe it.<sup>30</sup>

Plans possessing a broad scope are not necessarily superior to less comprehensive

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<sup>30</sup> Other prominent features of community plans include: recognition of social and economic objectives; based on critical analysis of existing conditions and forecasts of future conditions; incremental implementation strategy; reference and guide to capital improvements; and, a design component (Hodge 1991).

plans, but they do suggest that their creators are aware of the complexity of urban environments. Failing to recognize this, or simply denying it, reduces the likelihood of creating a good community. In Canada, the development of plans does not guarantee that governments, especially local authorities, will carry out their provisions, although they are legally restricted for taking action which can be considered inconsistent with the intent of their plans (Richardson 1989, 12).

#### 9.4.5. *Public Land Assembly*

Public land assembly programs (also referred to as public land banking) are primarily employed by governments to acquire land, through purchase or annexation, for residential development. Governments can also be involved with the actual development and marketing of housing. Other objectives include reducing land costs for home-buyers, controlling urban sprawl, providing land for social purposes that would otherwise be neglected by private interests (e.g., affordable housing, parks, and open space), and serving as revenue-generating ventures (Spurr 1976).

Since the 1950s, several Canadian municipalities have introduced land assembly programs including the Southern Ontario cities of Hamilton, Peterborough and Kingston, and in Western Canada, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan and Red Deer, Alberta. In each of these cases a number of objectives were simultaneously pursued. Generally, the programs were designed to address land-supply, and price and affordability issues. The federal government, through the Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), has also championed these programs either directly through funding and facilitation, or indirectly by encouraging Canadian municipalities to initiate land banking schemes.

A reasonable evaluation of land assembly programs can be undertaken from forty years of practice at the local level. In general terms, these experiences suggest that most stated objectives are achieved -- public amenities and social housing is provided, supplies of serviced land are increased, or land for residential purposes is provided at less than market values (Ibid.). Much of these program's criticism has been directed at the "pricing objective" which has in most cases had an considerable impact on the local housing market. These problems can be partially mitigated through better program planning and management, involvement of regional governments to improve coordination, and better relations between the public and private sectors.

#### 9.4.6. *Subdivision Controls*

Subdivision controls are the primary mechanism used in controlling and assisting the process of converting undeveloped, and often rural land, to developed land. Specifically, these regulations prescribe lot size and location, dedicating land for public purposes, and controlling the use of land and the timing of development. Subdivision controls afford authorities the ability to "ensure that developments take account of the community's need for public goods and services, of minimum standard requirements, and of immediate locational spillovers of costs and benefits" (Courtney 1983, 161).

Not all Canadian municipal governments have exclusive control over subdivision. In several provinces, the provincial government, or an intermediate body, have the powers to review locally-prepared subdivision plans. In the provinces of Alberta, Saskatchewan, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia, the province prepares and approves subdivision regulations that local governments must implement. In Ontario, Prince Edward Island, and

Manitoba, the provincial government has final control over subdivision, although local governments have the option of appealing plans and decisions (Audet and Le Henaff 1983).

#### 9.4.7. *Zoning*

Zoning is the basic tool of government land-use planning endeavours. Originally devised to control nuisances (e.g., noxious effluents and traffic-generated noise) by separating incompatible land-uses, zoning has evolved and been expanded to encompass numerous and diverse applications. The primary objectives of zoning are improved efficiency, generation of agglomeration benefits, specification of minimum health and safety requirements, and provision of land for public goods and services (Courtney 1983, 157).

At the municipal level, zoning is the primary device used to implement larger, comprehensive plans (i.e., official community plans). It is used to establish standards and guidelines for the use of specific parcels of land and the size, type, and siting of structures on that parcel (Courtney 1983; Hodge 1991; Hok 1989). Specific applications of zoning include: establishing maximum densities; setting parking and loading requirements; determining size, height and location of signage; establishing criteria and standards for accessory buildings and uses; permitting home occupations; establishing aesthetic criteria; and, allowing for the physical and functional integration of residential and commercial components into a single, large-scale developments (Courtney 1983; Hodge 1991).

Canadian municipal governments generally have sufficient powers necessary to prepare, adopt, and amend zoning bylaws (Audet and Le Henaff 1984). These represent local governments' most significant discretionary power.

There is general agreement among both practitioners and academics that a

sufficiently varied number of implementation mechanisms are available to serve the requirements of land planners. However, in combination they have "been perversely unsuccessful in ensuring an orderly development process -- the development of the right land, at the right time in the right location" (Bryant, Russwurm, McClellan 1982, 199). The roots of this assertion lie in the underlying shortcomings of the implementation tools -- they are essentially negative in approach, which may effectively control and prevent undesirable development, but does little to achieve desirable development (Hodge 1991). Compounding this weakness, is the relatively inflexibility of the tools which makes adjustment to rapid change difficult (Courtney 1983).

The most significant weaknesses of land-planning implementation mechanisms relates to their application. Critics of land-planning stress that the lack of consistent or unitary application of the tools seriously reduces their overall effectiveness. Furthermore, the application of the tools to serve special interests or property owners creates additional problems, such as the inequitable distribution of benefits (Ibid.). The reasons for these failures invariably stem from the absence of firm direction from higher governmental bodies, and the lack of a strong, coherent vision or plan to guide development and the application of implementation mechanisms (Hodge 1991; Richardson 1989).

When dealing with complex, regional growth problems it is necessary that implementation strategies and mechanism be coordinated and focused on the attainment of specific goals and objectives. Furthermore, experiences from the United States with comprehensive growth management indicate that a combination of both positive and negative implementation mechanisms are required. Since the majority of tools used in Canadian land-use planning initiatives are negative in nature, there is a definite need to

balance the selection of tools. Without these basic requirements, reaching meaningful solutions and achieving goals and objectives is jeopardized.

#### 9.5. Planning in the Metropolitan Toronto Region

The types of issues confronting politicians, planners, and the public in the Toronto region are very similar to those found in the Greater Vancouver. In each region livability is threatened by uncontrolled urban growth, environmental degradation, and inadequate infrastructure to meet the needs of a growing and increasingly diverse population. The Toronto area serves as the best Canadian example of regional-planning in heavily populated urban areas and where growth management has been highly developed as a policy response. The most important information that a Toronto-area study provides focuses on political and administrative structures. A review of these will provide valuable insights into the successes and pitfalls of attempting to implement regional government and growth management over a large geographic area with multiple, independent government bodies.

The Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto (Metro Toronto) is comprised of six area municipalities -- the Borough of East York, and the cities of Etobicoke, North York, Scarborough, Toronto, and York. Currently, there are approximately 2.3 million people located in area of only 630 square kilometres. The Greater Toronto Area (GTA), in which Metro Toronto is located, has a population of over four million in an total area of approximately 7,000 square kilometres (of which 1,500 square kilometres is urban and 5,500 is rural) (Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto 1992).

Metro Toronto was created in 1953 by the Province of Ontario in response to the uncontrolled growth of the City of Toronto into surrounding areas during the post Second

World War years.<sup>31</sup> At the time, it was realized by the provincial and various local governments that the complex growth and development problems, as well as the escalating costs of properly servicing growing populations, could only be effectively dealt with by a single municipality with broad ranging powers. Given the difficulty of creating a single "super" municipality, a federation of municipalities was proposed which would be more effective, and more politically realistic. Hence, Metropolitan Toronto was based on a two-tier system governed by a Metropolitan Council constituted by representatives from the original thirteen member municipalities. A regional planning board -- the Metropolitan Planning Board -- was established at the same time and given jurisdictional control over an area approximately twice as large as Metro Toronto proper in an attempt to give Metro planners some control over the surrounding fringe lands.<sup>32</sup> Metro Toronto, through the Metropolitan Planning Board, was provided with substantial planning powers -- including the responsibility for planning, developing and financing schools, road networks, water and sewage services, transit, and borrowing for capital projects (Friskin 1990; Hodge 1991). Other planning powers included authority to prepare official plans, develop and implement zoning bylaws, subdivision controls, redevelopment plans, and building bylaws.

By 1959 Metro Toronto had prepared its first official plan. Although not binding on area municipalities -- it served only in an advisory capacity -- it was nonetheless influential

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<sup>31</sup> Metro Toronto was one of three provincial initiatives to address the region's growth problems. First was the direct involvement in highway construction programs, hard services installation, and construction of major public facilities such as hospitals and education institutions. Second, the Province enacted the Planning Act (Lawson 1984).

<sup>32</sup> This arrangement would remain intact until the early 1970s, when the province established additional regional bodies on the periphery of Metro's boundaries. This action effectively took away Metro's broader regional planning authority.



at the time as most area municipalities had yet to enacted their own official plans. This situation persisted for a number of years until the planning apparatus of the municipalities matured and subsequently began to develop their own. As more of the municipalities enacted plans the involvement of Metro planners correspondingly declined, until their primary responsibility became ensuring that local plans and decisions supported Metro's plan.

Metro Toronto's track record with official plans was less than satisfactory, as was evident with by the 1959 plan's lack of success.<sup>33</sup> Although this plan established land-use patterns that are still evident today, it was considered ineffectual for two related reasons. First, implementation was under the control of member municipalities, and second, neither Metro Council nor the public fully supported it. The 1966 plan has been deemed equally ineffective for similar reasons.

An inability to properly implement an official plan and the continued concern with uncontrolled growth precipitated the provincial government to initiate the "Metro Toronto and Region Transportation Study" (MTARTS) in the 1960s. The authors of the study, in an attempt to find a solution to the growth problem, concluded, among other things, that "growth foreseen could result in the deterioration of condition in the region unless positive regional planning was undertaken and an appropriate plan was adopted and implemented" (Lawson 1984, 136). Taking this advice, the Province responded by creating the Regional Planning Board, which ultimately produced the Toronto-Centred Region Plan (officially adopted in 1970). The core elements of the plan, described as visionary goals and

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<sup>33</sup> The plan's main principles were decentralization of employment, reduction of commuting, balanced road and transit developments, preservation of open space, redevelopment of declining areas, and construction of new schools. A strategy to accommodate growth until 1980 was also included (Cameron 1979).

objectives, soon lead to public discontent. As well, the public was less than enthusiastic about the direction embarked on by the province. Wary of public discontent, the province withdrew "from adherence to the plan, and settled for a much more pragmatic approach of providing services and facilities where required and encouraging the regional municipalities to undertake the necessary planning" (Ibid., 136). In retrospect, the failure of the plan was attributable to inaccurate population projections formed in the 1960s which suggested dramatic growth and subsequently served as the primary justification for the plan. Thus, Lawson (1984) concludes, had accurate regional population projections been utilized, the Toronto-Centred Region (i.e., the GTA) plan would have been significantly different, and therefore would not have demanded actions that ultimately lead to political turmoil. The long-term effect of these events was to inhibit "any future move to provide a provincial plan to guide the evolution of the region" (Ibid., 136).

Another pivotal event had a similar impact on Metro Toronto's inability to effectively deal with growth on a broader geographic scale than suggested by their jurisdictional boundaries. When Metro was established in 1953, most of the GTA's population was located within its boundaries. At the time, the level of growth outside the boundary was not deemed sufficient to warrant expanding the boundary or to undertake other action. But at the same time it was also realized that at some future date, the boundary would probably have to be expanded. Regional planning initiatives were relatively successful during the 1950s and early 1960s so that growth pressures beyond Metro's boundaries were not of great concern. By the late 1960s, however, Metro planning efforts were failing to adequately accommodate urban growth. This situation was the result of a boundary that no longer matched its political jurisdiction. Thus, a "mismatch between

political-administrative space and socio-functional space" developed and subsequently grew (Bourne 1984, 138).<sup>34</sup> The provincial government's response to this situation was, in 1971, to create additional regional governments on Metro's periphery rather than expand its boundaries. The new regions were Durham, Halton, Peel, and York, respectively.

In retrospect this action can be viewed as misguided. A more appropriate course of action, assuming that the Province's real intention was to control the urbanization of areas surrounding Metro Toronto, should have been the expansion of Metro's jurisdictional control over the fast growing peripheral areas. Years later, the outcome of this decision is an "urbanized region of over 3,000,000 persons that, in broad outline at least, no one is explicitly planning" (Bourne 1984, 139). Furthermore, the Province's actions effectively terminated "any further direct responsibility on the part of the Metropolitan Corporation for the coordinated planning of the metropolitan region outside Metropolitan Toronto" (Wronski and Turnbull 1984, 128).<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> This problem has indeed persisted over the years as indicated by a comparison of GTA population under Metro Toronto control in 1953 and 1984. For example, in 1953 Metro accommodated 90 percent of population, but by 1984 only 66 percent.

<sup>35</sup> It has been suggested by Wronski and Turnbull (1984) that the creation of the four new regions was a provincial ploy designed to limit the growing power of Metro Toronto and to increase its own role in regional planning. The ramifications of the decision persist to this today as evident in Metropolitan Toronto's 1992 Draft Official Plan, entitled "The Liveable Metropolis." In it the authors clearly acknowledge that the realization of their vision of the future Metropolitan Toronto requires cooperation among, not only area municipalities, but also among surrounding regional governments and their area municipalities (Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto 1992, 9).

The Province's "Design for Development," a local government reform package, was a further attempt to limit Metro's power over adjacent municipalities -- Metro's influence outside its boundaries was dramatically reduced by this reform package -- and to increase its own involvement in municipal and regional planning efforts. Direct provincial involvement in planning matters never did materialize nor were provincial policies implemented at the local level. These failures were primarily due to poor coordination and incompatible and conflicting policy directives.

In 1980, Metro Toronto made another attempt at developing and enacting an official plan. This was received a better welcome by the public and area municipalities than had previous plans and adequately served to guide growth and development throughout the decade. However, the boundary issue had still not been resolved and a lack of coordinated planning activities was still evident at a broad geographic scale.

A positive outcome of the turmoil and difficulties of the 1970s was the establishment of the Provincial Planning Act of 1983. Failure to expand its own planning role, combined with pressure from the development industry, and regional and local governments, prompted the Province to develop an implementation strategy that was "more flexible, less prescriptive and generally more acceptable than local government reform" (Ibid., 133). The Province succumbed and effectively returned "the responsibility for making planning decisions to the municipal councils where it belonged (and) the Act does in fact ensure that provincial planning and development policy will inform every such decision; and, no longer with the policy statements issued by uncoordinated or express conflicting interest of government departments" (Ibid., 133).

The final noteworthy provincial action of the 1980s was the establishment of the Greater Toronto Coordinating Committee (GTCC) and the Office of the Greater Toronto Area (OGTA) in 1987. Motivated by the persistence of the boundary problem and the realization that it had to be effectively addressed if the continued prosperity and livability of the region was to be assured, the most recent provincial creations were given the formidable task of establishing coordinated planning of the GTA and thereby setting the stage for effectual and integrated regional planning in the 1990s. Specifically, the Coordinating Committee was charged with the responsibility of providing a forum for

discussion of regional issues, while the OGTA was to coordinate a growth management strategy.

The GTCC and the OGTA have undertaken much work in recent years to understand GTA issues and to prepare for the future. Included in this work were three studies jointly commissioned by the GTCC and the provincial government -- these are the Royal Commission on the Future of the Toronto Waterfront (1990), Options for a Greater Toronto Area Greenlands Strategy (1990), and the Greater Toronto Area Urban Structure Concepts study (1990) (Office for the Greater Toronto Area, undated).

Of these, the later is most significant as its objective was to compare three possible urban structure concepts -- spread, central, and nodal<sup>36</sup> -- in order to determine the most appropriate geographical form of urban development for the region. Realizing that current growth rates, the land required by this growth, and the cost of servicing this land were unsustainable, each option was evaluated on basis of a predefined set of objectives including: efficient use of existing infrastructure; reducing long-distance commuting, and supporting a modal split that favoured public transit; increasing the range of affordable housing; reducing air and water pollution; and, minimizing the loss of agricultural land. The study clearly indicated that, while the infrastructure requirements of each option were quite different, capital costs were very similar. Interestingly, it was on the basis of other differences, such as quality of life and quality of urban structure, that the most valuable comparisons could be made. In the end, the nodal concept was preferred ahead of the other

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<sup>36</sup> The "spread" option was a continuation of present patterns of low density development beyond the existing urban areas of the GTA. The "central" option focused on the high-density concentration of new development in existing built-up areas. The "nodal" option was based on the distribution of future growth throughout all suburban regions, but in contrast to the spread option, it would be focused on existing urbanized areas (Office for the Greater Toronto Area, undated).

two as it allowed for higher density living and working environments. It was regarded as having less impact on established communities, while providing for greater diversity in housing types and population/employment mixes. In sum, the nodal model was considered the preferred option as it offered some significant advantages and the fewest disadvantages (Bourne 1991).

Each of the studies have proven valuable, but possibly the most significant outcome has been the discovery of "an emerging consensus on important issues affecting the future pattern of development in the GTA" (Office for the Greater Toronto Area, undated, 13). For example, common ground has been reached on a number of crucial issues, including: the need for an environmental approach to planning; a desire to improve quality of life; a need for greater social equity; a nodal urban structure that reduces wasteful and inefficient urban sprawl; greater focus on transit as the preferred transportation mode; the need for a better balance between housing and employment; and, most interestingly, the need for the provincial government to assume "a strong leadership role in defining the framework for planning in the GTA and in coordinating implementation" (Ibid., 14). Specifically, it has been suggested that the Province provide a strategic planning framework, establish values and principles to guide local and regional planning, provide funding, and coordinate actions of Ministries to ensure consistency with GTA planning efforts.

The combined work of the GTCC and OGTA has not been overlooked as evident in Metro Toronto's Draft Official Plan (September 1992) -- the above referenced document entitled "The Liveable Metropolis." If the various studies did not provide sufficient motivation to rethink planning strategies and priorities, or to develop a new plan, Metro's realization that the 1980 Official Plan was no longer adequate in terms of efficiently or its

ability to effectively guide the growth and development of the region into the next century -  
- a century that promised radically different socio-economic conditions, rapid growth,  
heightened public concern for the integrity of the natural environment, and a changing  
political structure -- did.

The overriding objective of the draft plan is to achieve a vision of a "liveable metropolis," with the plan setting out a "framework for a better quality of life within Metropolitan Toronto (and) to present policies to guide the pattern of development across the region from a long-range planning perspective" (Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto 1992, 2).

The vision of a liveable metropolis is to be achieved through a multifaceted strategy of "reurbanization," which is broadly termed as urban reinvestment and redevelopment. The strategy addresses many common planning issues such as the reduction of sprawl, automobile dependency, natural resource depletion, and public servicing costs associated with development. The development of a more efficient "metropolitan structure" -- in terms of infrastructure, servicing, cost, location of development, and density -- will lead to the realization of these objectives.

The Metro Toronto vision of livability is based on three planning themes: a healthy environment, economic vitality, and social well-being. Drawing heavily from the concept of sustainable development, the authors of the draft plan regard a "balance" between these themes, which are correctly acknowledged as often being in direct conflict with each other, as crucial to the attainment of liveability. The emphasis on a healthy environment stems from an understanding that the region's natural environment is placed under considerable stress by a growing population. Concern for air and water quality, the loss of natural

habitat and green space, and disrupted natural processes have lead to the introduction of many environmental policies into the draft plan covering a broad range of issues including urban forestry, stormwater management, solid waste management, and air and water quality.

The economic vitality theme focuses on maintaining Metro Toronto's position as the focal point of the national and provincial economies by creating a "diverse, competitive and adaptable economic environment" (Ibid., 35). Recognizing that Metro Toronto's economic fate is largely in the hands of global forces beyond their control, the Metro planners have focused their efforts on attracting information-driven industries, providing a high quality and accessible workforce, providing competitive telecommunications and computer networks, efficient transportation systems and other infrastructure, and an urban structure that enhances economic strength and vibrancy.

The social well-being theme stresses the creation of a "strong, healthy and equitable" community and a high quality of life (Ibid., 40). The objective is to provide Metro residents with opportunities for participation in decision making, enhancing community identity, providing open space, diverse and adequate accommodation and transportation options, and creating interesting and vibrant streetscapes and public meeting places.

Fulfilling the intent of each of the themes necessitates that the structure of Metro Toronto be overhauled, or "reurbanized" via an involved process of redevelopment and reinvestment. Primary reurbanization objectives are: reducing the public's dependency on the private automobile by establishing higher density living and working environments that increase the feasibility of walking, cycling, and public transit; providing a diverse range of places for business activities to locate to; focusing employment opportunities to make effective and efficient use of public transit facilities; and, encouraging mixed-use



development, accessible facilities, and open space.

Achieving Metro's vision of liveable future is a daunting task. Undoubtedly, the key to its successful attainment will heavily depend on how well the proposed plan can be implemented. Aware of the importance of this issue, the author's dedicate an entire section to implementation. In it, strategies and policies for intermunicipal decision-making, capital works investments, management and operation of physical facilities and services, and research and monitoring activities are outlined and discussed. The plan's implementation strategy is based on the four principles of cooperation, collaboration, coordination, and commitment. Although these are directed towards Metro's member municipalities, they are pivotal in the context of neighbouring municipalities and regions. If these jurisdictions prefer to pursue their own agendas, goals, or objectives, rather than a common set, it is unlikely that the vision of the liveable metropolis will ever be attained. History has shown that this is a very real possibility. A repeat of history would also be detrimental to the residents of both Metro Toronto and adjacent regions.

Metropolitan Toronto's 1992 Draft Plan represents an excellent example of integrated regional planning as it covers all of the major planning themes -- economic vitality, environmental integrity, social well-being, and efficient and effective urban structure. Although a battle-tested administrative structure exists to promote its successful implementation, the plans biggest test, and probably its biggest obstacle, is the level of political and public support that it will receive. Support is largely dependent on how the public perceives growth problems and how willingly they will accept changes in their lifestyles. External conditions, such as the state of the economy, will also have a significant effect on how vigorously the public supports the plan and are willing to make

sacrifices to achieve its vision. If the plan is perceived to carry excessive costs, real or imaginary, it will probably be rejected, or at minimum marginalized so that it is never completely implemented.

The draft plan's more glaring deficiency, as well as the major deficiency of past plans, is the limited geographic and administrative area that it covers. This is no fault of Metro Toronto as they are simply working within their provincially-defined power base. Aware that successful attainment of their vision is dependent on adjacent authorities supporting and adhering to the draft plan's principles, Metro has attempted to generate voluntary support. This, however, will likely be insufficient. Should the plan fail, blame should be directed towards the Province which has apparently chosen not to correct the "boundary problem" which first arose two decades ago. Had the Province displayed the will and foresight to require all of the GTA's jurisdictions to work towards common goals and objectives, and in a coordinated manner, the plan's underlying goal of a liveable metropolis may have been assured.

Planning for the Greater Toronto Area has seen its ups and downs over the course of four decades. Regardless, the region, and especially Metropolitan Toronto, has remained a livable place and serves as the North America's best example of what highly populated urban areas can strive to become.

Maintenance of the GTA's livability, as well as its image as a livable place, is largely dependent on how well politicians and planners can manage several major issues that have in the past represented significant barriers to effective regional planning. First, the boundary issue must be resolved. If the mismatch between political-administrative space and socio-functional space is not properly resolved it is unlikely that growth and

related problems will be corrected.

Second, the lack of coordinated planning activities within the GTA, arising from the confusing "distribution of responsibilities for planning among the various municipalities and the three levels of government" that has ultimately lead to "frequent internal conflicts, wasteful competition, contradictory policy actions, almost random political interventions by the province and little in the way of integrated regional planning," must be addressed (Bourne 1984, 139). Bourne (1991) also suggests that the current practice of the area's five regional governments pursuing their own agendas, with respect to employment growth, development, transportation, economic development, and urban spatial structure, is the direct result of a lack of coordination.

A final obstacle to successful regional planning in the GTA focuses on the manner in which benefits and costs of growth and development are distributed (Bourne 1984). Equitable distribution is required vertically (among social classes and sectors) and horizontally (among the GTA's various jurisdictions). The issue of equity has rarely been raised in the past, let alone acted on, but definitely needs to be as it represents a key indicator of livability.

These issues suggest that the real lesson arising from the Toronto's experience with regional planning is the need for effective coordination and commitment among all government authorities if growth is to be controlled and a higher quality of life is to be achieved for residents. Coordination and commitment is required at two levels. First, within the GTA's individual regions, and second, and most importantly, within the GTA as a whole.

A second message is the need for the Province to assume a strong and positive role,

and to provide strong guidance and leadership. It must be supportive of regional initiatives and it must not attempt to expand its own role control or influence. Rather, it must become an equal partner with the regions. Finally, the Toronto experience makes it clear that the Province must take a firm stance and make decisions on complex and potentially unpopular issues even if the political repercussions may be significant and damaging.

#### 9.6. Summary

The objective of this chapter was to determine if comprehensive growth management programs could be moulded from the Canadian land-planning experience. This was accomplished by reviewing the theory, practice, and administrative structure of Canadian land-use planning, commonly used implementation instruments and methods, and finally, examining regional planning experiences in the Toronto region.

This analysis has revealed many useful insights into the feasibility of successfully developing and implementing a comprehensive growth management program in Canada. For example, it has been found that society's view of institutional planning is less than ideal, thereby restricting the extent of its application and certainly its effectiveness. Under these conditions, growth management, which may be perceived as excessive government intrusion into private affairs, would probably be greeted with much scepticism.

In terms of administrative structures, a vehicle to develop and guide comprehensive growth management programs already exists in the form of regional governments. In their current state, however, these bodies would have difficulty developing, implementing, or administering such programs in an effective manner. Necessary improvements include, at minimum, restoration of previously delegated powers, strengthened enabling legislation,

expansion of basic planning powers, and greater provincial support and guidance. In addition, local authorities need to rethink their priorities and expectations and consider the regional implications of their decisions and policies. Since the best efforts of regional governments can be quickly derailed by either provincial or local authorities it is imperative that cooperation and coordination, preferably voluntarily, become the norm.

A number of implementation instruments and methods are available for use by government authorities. Since successful growth management programs require a mix of positive and negative instruments it will be necessary to balance the current inventory which is skewed towards the negative side. In addition, firm direction from higher levels of government and strong plans to guide growth and development are required to ensure that all instruments, either positive or negative, are consistently and equitably employed.

Many lessons can be learned from regional planning experiences in the Greater Toronto Area. First and foremost is the need for a single authority, armed with adequate powers, to coordinate planning activities throughout a geographically-broad and populous region. The absence of such an authority in the Toronto area has not resulted in complete disaster, but it has limited the effectiveness of regional initiatives designed to preserve livability, quality of life, and environmental integrity. Second, coordination and cooperation between all of a region's governmental authorities, including the provincial government, is required. The provincial government also needs to assume a strong leadership role by providing effective guidance, direction, and support..

Readily available tools, knowledge, and political structures suggest that it would not be unrealistic to develop a Canada-specific comprehensive growth management program. However, it is equally clear that many improvements are required if such a program were

expected to effectively control growth and development.

As it appears that all the pieces are in place, the question becomes, Why have sophisticated growth management programs not been developed nor implemented in Canada, except in limited number of cases? The answer to this question is partially found in Canadian society's view of growth and land. For decades growth has been regarded as a positive force contributing to the economic well-being of the country -- it was certainly not viewed as detrimental nor where its costs perceived as exorbitant, if indeed they were acknowledged at all. But even as people and governments have become more aware of the negative consequences and growing costs of growth, concern has not been excessive as it is often reasoned that uncontrolled growth is not a major problem deserving radical solutions and change in our lifestyles due in large part to Canada's seemingly inexhaustible land mass and natural resources. When this argument is supplemented by the acknowledgement of relatively small population, concern for uncontrolled growth is further diminished. Thus, neither the public nor government have committed to controlling or managing growth except to protect high quality agricultural land or valuable natural areas threatened by urban encroachment. Yet, even when this occurred, protection was often undertaken in a haphazard manner leading to unsatisfactory results. Recently, greater environmental consciousness combined with a realization that urban growth is exacting a heavy toll on our shared environment and the livability of our urban areas has slowly transformed the perception of growth so that a consensus is presently emerging that growth can no longer continue unchecked. This change is evident in British Columbia's Greater Vancouver region where the public and government are working together towards developing a strategy for protecting the region's environmental integrity and livability.

## CHAPTER 10

### TARGETING GROWTH: PRESERVING LIVABILITY IN GREATER VANCOUVER

#### 10.1. Introduction

Planning in Greater Vancouver is widely acknowledged as an extremely challenging endeavour due to inhibiting factors such as a limited land mass arising from significant geographic barriers, fragmented and overlapping government structures, the lack of a strong regional body to provide direction and guidance, and a diverse and rapidly growing population. In recent years, regional and local planning activities have focused on the preservation of the region's high livability and quality of life that has been placed under mounting pressure from rapid population growth (see Chapter 2 for a discussion of Lower Mainland growth issues). This is an extremely complicated issue for which straight-forward and short-term solutions are not readily available. Preserving livability will continue to be the focus of planning activities in the future as growth-related threats persist and, most likely, intensify.

In this chapter, prominent efforts to manage Greater Vancouver's growth and control its by-products are reviewed. Barriers to the preservation of livability are also identified. Emphasis is placed on the GVRD's *Choosing Our Future* program since it represents the most structured and broad-based action yet initiated to address growth and livability issues. The chapter concludes by assessing the prospects of preserving livability in the context of recent growth-oriented initiatives and strategies.

## 10.2. The Livable Region Strategy - The People Speak

In the mid-1970s growth pressures and related problems grew into high-profile political issues. Driven by growing public concern over the apparent undeterred erosion of livability in Greater Vancouver, the GVRD undertook the expansive *Livable Region Program*, which has been described by one observer as "a ground-breaking adventure in regional planning" (Rashleigh 1992). With the ultimate goal being the development of a regional plan, it revolved around a unique and somewhat unorthodox public consultation process designed to uncover the region's most important qualities and to establish parameters for a new regional plan. Shying away from traditional approaches to public consultation, then Director of the GVRD, Harry Lash assembled a cast of "flexible and unconventional thinkers" to gather pure public feedback that was not filtered, sanitized, nor translated into the "planning-speak" language of professional planners. Lash argued that the decision to use non-professionals was necessary to ensure an "open-ended exercise in primary democracy" (Fawcett 1992, 28) that would lead to a regional plan that both respected and embraced livability.

The *Livable Region Program's* public participation component revolved around a "continual, two-way interaction between the public, the politician, and the bureaucrat/planner" (Rashleigh 1992, 32). Lash's unbending commitment to the public process made it possible for remarkable strides to be made towards developing a regional growth management program and the attainment of a vision of livability in Greater Vancouver. The citizen participation program was extremely successful in identifying issues, discussing and assessing possible trade-offs, and devising implementation strategies. Rashleigh (Ibid., 33) has identified four aspects of the *Livable Region Program* that made it



both a unique planning / public participation experience and, ultimately, a success. These were:

1. The program dealt with only those livability issues identified as community concerns;
2. Public input was the starting point and the driving force for the whole policy development and implementation process;
3. Public input was ongoing; and
4. Political leaders were heavily involved in ongoing public deliberations.<sup>37</sup>

The program successfully culminated with the adoption of a regional plan -- *The Livable Region Proposals: 1976-86* -- by the GVRD Board in 1975. One of the plan's key contributions was a five-part regional growth management strategy. The five building blocks of the plan were:

1. Designation of residential growth targets for each part of the region;
2. A balance of jobs to population throughout, and within each part of, the region;
3. Creation of regional town centres (RTCs);<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Rashleigh (1992) notes that the GVRD Board members of the day were personally involved and very supportive of open public discussion. Their commitment as spokespersons for the *Program* brought to it considerable credibility and awareness.

<sup>38</sup> The creation of a system of regional town centres was regarded as one the basic and most important elements of a livable region since they translated into a balanced distribution of jobs and housing, higher density living environments, alternative transportation modes, a human scale and pedestrian-friendly environments, and a balanced mixture of activities (GVRD 1993f). In 1975, the GVRD Board approved the RTC concept and subsequently the establishment of four town centres located in Burnaby (Metrotown), New Westminster, North Surrey, and the Northeast sector (i.e., the area around Port Moody, Coquitlam, and Port Coquitlam). See Chapter 10.5. for further discussions of regional town centres.

4. Establishment of a transit-oriented transportation system linking residential areas, RTCs, and major employment areas; and
5. Identification and protection of regional open space / parks.

Celebrations were short lived, however, as soon after the plan's adoption it began to falter and eventually failed. Several explanations of its short life have been suggested, including:

1. The provincial government did not support neither the GVRD nor the *Livable Region Program*;
2. Regardless of the exceptionally progressive public participation campaign, the GVRD remained remote from most citizens; its concerns and its power to act were neither understood nor seen as important;
3. The *Livable Region Program* did not gain lasting political appeal because its proposals were remote from the lives of citizens, its objectives were too complex and too long-term to be of importance;
4. Local municipal politicians, protective of their power bases, preferred a GVRD that was remote and distant from the general population. Also, local governments were often unwilling to make decisions in the best interest of the region, especially when they ran contrary to the demands and expectations of the local electorate;
5. The removal of regional planning powers in 1983 effectively ensured that the plan would ever be implemented; and
6. A growing political movement of the late 1970s and early 1980s towards deregulation and privatization was deeply opposed to the notion of regional

growth management and heightened government regulation and control  
(Fawcett 1992, 28; Rashleigh 1992, 33).

The combined effect of each of these was to reduce the "*Livable Region* to a shadow of its original vitality and visionary presence" (Fawcett 1992, 28).

In later years, interest in the *Livable Region Program* would periodically be renewed but its ideas and policies would never be given serious consideration nor would serious efforts be expended towards their implementation. For example, only two -- Burnaby's Metrotown and Surrey's Whalley Guildford -- of the five proposed regional town centres began to take shape, and even these were far from the image of complete communities originally envisioned. The preservation of farmland, another central goal of the Livable Region, has not materialized as Greater Vancouver land resources are still pressured by haphazard and market-driven urban sprawl. On the positive side, the *Livable Region Program* showed the effectiveness and successfulness of a well-conceived and supported public process. Citizens of Greater Vancouver readily took up the challenge of trying to protect its livability. Blame for the program's failure should not be borne by the people who participated but, rather, by the political institutions and power brokers that were neither willing to offer it full support nor to accept the change that it represented.

### 10.3. Choosing Our Future, the Livable Region Strategic Plan and Transport 2021 - An Agenda for the '90s

In the late 1980s, concern over the diminishing and threatened quality of life in Greater Vancouver resurfaced as a political issue. High growth levels evident throughout the previous decade combined with projections which indicated that the region's population

would continue to grow rapidly well into the next century fuelled this concern. The Greater Vancouver Regional District (GVRD) seized the opportunity to revisit regional growth and related issues by initiating another public consultation program, *Choosing Our Future*, to once again establish the populace's regional priorities and to lay the foundation for another regional plan. In addition, the public's growing dissatisfaction and frustration over mobility within the region provided the necessary impetus to embark on the *Transport 2021* regional transportation study.

#### 10.3.1 *Choosing Our Future - Revisiting Livability*

Fifteen years after the *Livable Region Process* concluded, the GVRD embarked on a similar public consultation process, *Choosing Our Future*. The objective of the process was three-fold: to once again determine the values and concerns of the region's populace; to review and redefine the region's development policy; and, to establish an updated set of regional goals and priorities to pursue (GVRD 1993f; GVRD 1993d). Between December 1989 and April 1990, many well-attended public forums, meetings, and seminars were used to discuss the challenges that the region faced and the forces that were undermining livability. Not surprisingly, the process' findings were quite similar to those found a decade and a half before. The public was still concerned, if not more concerned, about the integrity of Greater Vancouver's livability. There was strong agreement that over the previous 15 years the region's livability had been rapidly eroded and should growth be permitted to proceed unchecked in the future the region's livability would be completely destroyed. The *Choosing Our Future Program* provided evidence that a broad-based consensus existed to undertake strong and immediate action.

From *Choosing Our Future*, five critical livability objectives were identified as being vital to the preservation of livability in Greater Vancouver:

1. *Maintaining a Healthy Environment.* A healthy environment meant high quality water and air resources;
2. *Conserving Land Resources.* Geographic constraints meant that the conservation of limited land resources was essential to the region's continued livability. Conservation measures should focus on establishing and protecting a green zone and developing more compact and self-sufficient living environments;
3. *Serving a Changing Population.* Livability was seen as more than the physical and environmental quality of the region. People's social needs, including housing and health care, were to be attended to and adequately served. This was becoming increasingly complex since the region's population demographics were rapidly changing;
4. *Maintaining the Region's Economic Health.* Economic health could not be taken for granted, but equally, it could not come at the expense of the natural environment nor human needs; and
5. *Managing the Region.* Preservation of Greater Vancouver's livability could only be ensured if local, regional, and provincial governments cooperatively implemented the actions identified by the region's residents as vital and necessary (GVRD 1990a).

The process, which also included a substantial amount of research, culminated in the adoption of *Creating Our Future: Steps to a More Livable Region* by the GVRD Board of

Directors on July 29, 1990. Described as a policy umbrella, it established a "framework for maintaining and enhancing the livability of Greater Vancouver" (GVRD 1993, 4) in the form of 54 regional actions, or "steps." At a time of heightened optimism there was a pervading belief that:

Greater Vancouver [could] become the first urban region in the world to combine in one place the things to which humanity aspires on a global basis: a place where human activities enhance rather than degrade the natural environment, where the quality of the built environment approaches that of the natural setting, where the diversity of origins and religions is a source of social strength rather than strife, where people control the destiny of their community, and where the basics of food, clothing, shelter, security and useful activity are accessible to all (GVRD 1990a, 7).

Adoption of the *Creating Our Future: Steps to a More Livable Region* document was not, however, an end unto itself. Since that time, considerable effort by the GVRD, local government, and the public, has been extended towards implementing the document's 54 steps and towards achieving its goals and objectives. Public participation has maintained a prominent position in the "second phase" of the *Choosing Our Future Program*. A total of 12 forums were scheduled between July 1990 and December 1992 with the intent of further refining livability-preserving strategies and programs.

One of these, the "Shaping Our Communities: The Challenges of Regional Growth and Transportation Conference," held in May 1992, was used to discuss Greater Vancouver's future, the implications of current development trends and policies, and critical decision areas that would shape Greater Vancouver's future development pattern and transportation network (GVRD 1992e). Conference participants, including citizens, government representatives, agency representatives, and politicians, clearly indicated that current trends were alarming and that contemporary development patterns and planning policies could not be continued. Participants agreed that if a "business as usual" attitude

towards growth and development was permitted to continue unobstructed, the attainment of the goals and objectives of *Choosing Our Future* would be jeopardized. They cited urban sprawl, present forms of urban design, inadequate transportation infrastructure, and resident's lifestyles (specifically their infatuation with single-family housing and private automobiles) as the primary threats. Acknowledging the inevitability of growth in the future, the conference's participants recognized that personal lifestyles would have to change and adapt to match new realities as well as reaffirming that future regional and local planning activities necessarily had to focus on where people live, work, and play, and how they move (GVRD 1992b). The conference concluded with participants suggesting alternative strategies, including more dense communities, more convenient transit, and greater transportation choices, necessary to halt the erosion of regional livability (Kellas 1992).

A second major conference, "Shaping Our Communities: The Critical Choices," was held November 28th, 1992 to discuss, in general, regional growth management and transportation. With the aid of innovative facilitation technology, 450 conference participants discussed and responded to a number of livability issues including environment quality, land resource conservation, social needs, and economic health. The conference's most important component were discussions focusing on three growth management options:

1. *Current Trends and Development Policies.* Current trends and development policies of community plans would remain intact and the greatest growth pressures would continue to be experienced south of the Fraser River and east of Delta;
2. *Fraser North Corridor.* Significant growth would occur in the Fraser Valley,

but north of the Fraser River; and

3. *Compact Metropolitan Area (CMA)*. Growth would be focused within already urbanized areas of the Burrard Peninsula and developing communities of the North East Sector and Surrey (GVRD 1993d, 2).

Most conference participants indicated a preference for the Compact Metropolitan Area option because it represented the best opportunities for an efficient transportation system and the protection of agricultural land and natural areas (GVRD 1993c; GVRD 1993d). There was not, however, a clear consensus that the CMA option was the preferred approach as many people used the "Other" option to indicate a preference for "complete communities" either by focusing growth into existing town centres or by making all of the region's communities more complete. Other participants suggested additional variations on the CMA theme such as the creation of satellite cities up the Fraser Valley or designating the North Fraser River area as a focus for long-term growth. While there was some uncertainty regarding the best, or most appropriate option, participants were quite clear that the Current Trends and Development Policies option was entirely inappropriate.

Recently, the original 54 steps of *Creating Our Future* have been revisited in order to: reflect on progress made towards implementation of specific actions; delete actions that did not have municipal support; recast policies in a more general form; and, clarify the intent of some of the statements (GVRD 1993a). This work culminated in the publishing of *Creating Our Future - Steps to a More Livable Region (1993)* which contains 35 statements (including strategic principles and operation policies). As with the first document, the 35 statements support five main themes areas: healthy environment; land resources; changing populations; economic health; and, managing the region.



With the consolidation of the public's values and goals in the 1993 version of *Creating Our Future*, the focus shifted to the difficult task of implementation. In 1993, the GVRD and its member municipalities identified five crucial steps to be taken in the near future. These were:

1. Adopt a strategy to improve air quality in partnership with other regional districts in the Lower Mainland;
2. Adopt the *Livable Region Strategic Plan*;
3. Adopt a *Transport 2021* plan to ensure that public transportation investments reinforce recognized regional values;
4. Redefine and restructure the role and mandates of regional government; and
5. Establish financial priorities for the sewer, drinking water, hospital, solid waste, transit and other investments the region will have to make to secure our future (GVRD 1993a, 23).

#### 10.3.2 *The Livable Region Strategic Plan - A Regional Growth Management Strategy*

During the *Creating Our Future* public consultation process a total of 16 conferences and workshops on a wide range of issue areas were held and attended by over 5,000 participants (GVRD 1993g). Following the completion of this ground work, the GVRD began the task of preparing a regional plan, *The Livable Region Strategic Plan*, that would serve as the guidepost for change well into the next century. The plan, which was "developed by consensus and implemented through partnerships with member municipalities and other agencies" (GVRD 1993, B1), represents the primary mechanism to achieve the goals and values established by participants of the *Creating Our Future Program*. The

Plan's particular focus would be to provide guidance and direction to changes in land-use, transportation and other infrastructure over the next 30 years (1993 to 2021). Its four key components or policy directions are:

1. *Green Zone.* Identification of the region's green zone areas to be protected from urban development. Restricting development from environmentally unique or important recreational areas will help to protect the ecological integrity of the region. The Green Zone, which includes watersheds, major parks, ecologically important lands and farmland, spans two-thirds of the GVRD's total land area, including a significant portion of the region's developable low lands;
2. *Growth Management Strategy.* Development of objectives for sharing population and employment growth among communities in order to create a better balance between jobs and resident population and to correct traffic congestion problems. The over-riding objective is the containment of urban sprawl that is perceived as the greatest threat to the region's livability. Growth management equates to higher density living areas, increased housing options, better transportation systems, and a rethinking of the traditional suburb;
3. *Major Centres.* Designation of major centres of higher density development throughout Greater Vancouver and refinement of a hierarchy of centres. As well, the changing demographic structure of the region's population necessitates the building of more complete communities that offer residents greater diversity, choice, and convenience. Regional town centres will be

reinforced as urban places, offering housing, jobs, and recreational options.

An emphasis on alternative transportation modes (i.e., other than the private automobile) will provide for efficient and effective mobility; and

4. *Transportation.* Identification of the kind of transportation system required to support the development objectives and serve the region's travel demands.

The objective is too limit the proliferation of the private automobile and to provide residents a greater choice of mobility (GVRD 1993c; GVRD 1993d; GVRD 1993g; GVRD 1992a).

An important element of the *Creating Our Future Program* was the identification of growth management options, one of which would form the basis of the *Livable Region Strategic Plan*. The combined efforts of the general public and the public and private sectors helped to accomplish this. To assist in the selection of a growth management option that would be capable of meeting the challenges of preserving Greater Vancouver's livability, a set of 16 evaluation criteria were developed from *Creating Our Future's* 54 actions statements<sup>39</sup>. The criteria, which reflect the multi-faceted nature of livability, address many critical issues areas including the region's physical and natural environment, land resources, housing, access and mobility, and human needs. The GVRD's plan evaluative criteria, which closely resemble the general goals and objectives of comprehensive growth management programs recently employed the United States, are shown in Table 10.1..

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<sup>39</sup> These criteria where developed by the GVRD's Technical Advisory Committee and officially endorsed by the GVRD's Development Services Committee in November, 1992.

| <b>Table 10.1.</b><br><b>GVRD's Growth Management Options Evaluative Criteria</b> |  |
|---|--|
| 1.  | Maximize improvement to air quality.   |
| 2.  | Maximize improvement to receiving water quality.   |
| 3.  | Minimize the cost to provide a reliable supply of high quality water and to manage liquid wastes.  |
| 4.  | Minimize the population at risk on floodplains, areas subject to damage from earthquakes, and unstable slopes.   |
| 5.  | Maximize the maintenance and enhancement of natural areas and open space.  |
| 6.  | Minimize the pressure for the development of agricultural land for non-agricultural purposes.  |
| 7.  | Minimize the consumption of land to accommodate population and employment growth.  |
| 8.  | Provide sufficient flexibility for municipalities to serve different housing needs and to mix uses in order to maintain or achieve diversity, vitality, livability and community identity. |
| 9.  | Maximize the potential for development of affordable housing throughout the region.  |
| 10.   | Maximize opportunities to live close to work and work close to home.   |
| 11.   | Maximize accessibility to social, cultural and recreational facilities.  |
| 12.   | Maximize opportunities for walking, cycling and efficient public transit and minimize the need for travel by automobile.   |
| 13.   | Minimize the transportation, electrical and other energy requirements of the region.   |

| <p align="center"><b>Table 10.1. - Continued</b><br/> <b>GVRD's Growth Management Options Evaluative Criteria</b></p> |  |
|---|--|
| 14.   | Provide the most effective structure of major centres and transportation necessary to support a growing economy. |
| 15.   | Support the efficient movement of people and goods both within the region and with other regions.                |
| 16.   | Maximize the potential to meet the diverse needs of the future population.                                       |

Source: GVRD 1993b, 6-7.<sup>40</sup>

The GVRD used these criteria to identify two development principles -- "community structure"<sup>41</sup> and the preservation of the green zone<sup>42</sup> -- that would predicate a growth management strategy if it were to achieve broader goals. These principles, which are consistent with the 16 evaluative criteria, were used to further simplify the selection of an appropriate growth management strategy for the region.

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<sup>40</sup> Although these criteria represent a useful starting point in the selection of a growth management strategy for Greater Vancouver, it is important to acknowledge their limitations. First, many of the criteria conflict with each other making it necessary to make difficult trade-offs. Second, the importance and merits of individual criteria does not preclude the fact that some of them "cannot become absolute rules if the plan is to be realistic" (GVRD 1993b, 8).

<sup>41</sup> Community structure refers to the qualities of "completeness" and "compactness." Complete communities, which should not be confused with "self-contained communities," maximize resident's choices and the closer proximity of amenities and jobs. Completeness is measured by the balance between a community's number of jobs and its resident labour force, the balance between where people work and where they live, the range of urban services and amenities available, and the diversity of the housing stock. Compact communities, which refers to the physical extent and organization of a community, means increased proximity and accessibility to transportation, services, employment, housing, and amenity options. Completeness is not mutually exclusive of compactness.

<sup>42</sup> Greater Vancouver's green zone is defined as the sum of all its open spaces and natural areas "that play a vital role in the economy, health, livability and definition of metropolitan Vancouver region" (GVRD 1993b, 12). Lands located within the green zone are precluded from development, while those outside it can be considered for development. Maintaining the integrity of the green zone supports many of the 16 evaluative criteria and the objectives of complete and compact communities.

The GVRD subsequently developed three growth management options for consideration in Greater Vancouver. These options arose from what are considered as the only two possible directions for future growth to occur: east into the Fraser Valley, both north and south of the river; and, within established urbanized areas of the region (GVRD 1992d). Two options, "Current Trends and Development Policies"<sup>43</sup> and "Fraser North Corridor" evolved from the former, while the third option, "Compact Metropolitan Area", grew from the later. The Current Trends and Development Policies Option, as its title indicates, represents maintenance of the status quo as suggested by current municipal trends and plans so that 51% of future population growth (1991 to 2021) would be experienced south of the Fraser River and east of Delta (GVRD 1992d). It would result in considerable pressures on the agricultural land reserve (ALR), increased automobile dependence, higher infrastructure costs, more urban sprawl, and an unbalanced distribution of housing and jobs. Focusing growth north of the Fraser River, as suggested by the Fraser North Option is rationalized by the availability of a large area of developable land outside the agricultural land reserve.<sup>44</sup> By 2021, the area would accommodate approximately 700,000 people, representing 60% of region's population growth in that time. Growth in the area is, however, dependent on significant transportation improvements.

The Compact Metropolitan Area (CMA) option varies dramatically from the other two options as growth would be directed into existing urbanized areas and away from the agricultural land reserve. The Burrard Peninsula would receive 31% of future population

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<sup>43</sup> This option entrenches the current direction of growth as evident south of the Fraser River.

<sup>44</sup> A joint study by the Agricultural Land Commission and the Dewdney Alouette Regional District identified up to 13,000 hectares of developable land in the area.

growth (370,000 people) while the North East Sector (Coquitlam and Port Coquitlam), North Surrey and North Delta would accommodate 65% of future growth (770,000 people). Little growth would occur outside these areas. The underlying implication of this option is higher density living environments in currently proposed development areas and around existing regional town centres.

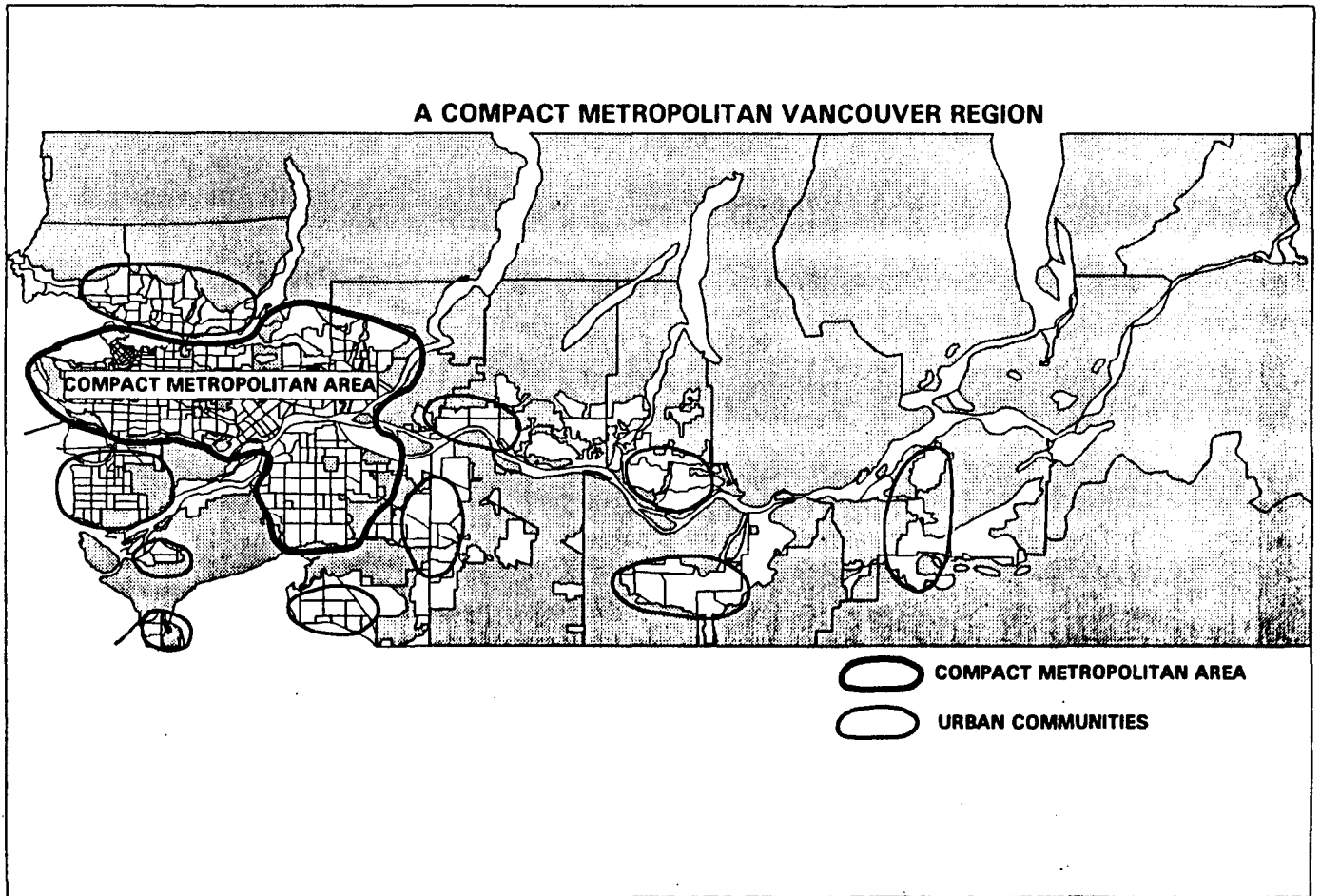
Of the three options the Compact Metropolitan Area concept was deemed by the GVRD and the public as the most appropriate and was subsequently endorsed (see map 10.1. [GVRD 1993b, 14]). It is, as suggested by its name, based on the notion of retaining "more growth within a central area of the region than would occur if the trends of the past decades continued" (GVRD 1993b, 15). Within a defined central region<sup>45</sup> the majority of growth would be directed towards existing regional town centres in Surrey, Burnaby, New Westminster, and Coquitlam. Inevitable growth pressures that would arise outside the CMA would not be opposed but would rather be focused into more complete and compact communities.

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<sup>45</sup> The Compact Metropolitan Area includes the Municipalities of Vancouver (and the University Endowment Lands [UEL]), Burnaby, New Westminster, Port Coquitlam, Coquitlam, Port Moody, Anmore, and Belcarra, and the northern areas of Delta and Surrey.

**Map 10.1.**

**GVRD's Compact Metropolitan Area (CMA)**



Source: GVRD 1993b., 14



The three defining qualities of the Compact Metropolitan Area option are housing, population, and employment. Charting future changes of each of these can indicate the extent and type of restructuring that will result from its implementation. By 2021 the CMA option would have, in general, resulted in considerable redistribution of each of these variables. For example, approximately 60% of the region's current dwelling units<sup>46</sup> would be located in the CMA. By 2021 it is expected that this share would rise to 67%, or approximately 863,000 of the region's expected number of dwelling units. Increased concentrations of residential housing would assist in alleviating urban sprawl and creating a more compact urban structure. Population distribution would similarly be affected. In 1991 the CMA contained 58% (997,000) of the region's total population (1.75 million) but by 2021 it will contain 66% of the expected population. Finally, 71% of employment will be located in the CMA in 2021 as compared to the current 66% share. Higher concentrations of housing and jobs in the CMA is analogous to a closer balance between jobs and labour force, and represents progress towards creating more compact and complete communities at the regional level.

Movement towards a similar balance would also be observed at the sub-regional level. For example, the Vancouver and University Endowment Lands (UEL) sub-area, which in 1991 had 30% of the regions dwelling units, 27% of its population, and 40% of its employment, would have 24% of the regions dwelling units, 21% of its population, and 29% of its employment in 2021.<sup>47</sup> A balance between jobs and labour force would

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<sup>46</sup> 406,00 of 675,000 dwelling units (GVRD 1993b, 17).

<sup>47</sup> It is important to note that even though the regional share of housing, population, and employment would fall from current levels, in real terms the sub-area would continue to experience growth. For example, by 2021 an additional 99,000 dwelling units would be created, population would increase by 148,000 people,

materialize less rapidly in the Vancouver / UEL sub-area in comparison to others because of its existing large stock of housing and employment. In general, more established and urbanized areas would change more slowly and less dramatically than in other suburban areas such as North Surrey and North Delta sub-area which are expected to experience sufficient growth to make it the region's second urban core by 2021. Here, regional housing share would grow to 19% (10 % in 1991), population 21% (12% in 1991), and employment 18% (7% in 1991). In real terms, the extent of these changes are even more striking: 176,000 more housing units, 395,000 more people, and 211,000 more jobs.

Areas located outside the CMA, such as the North Shore, Richmond, Pitt Meadows, and Maple Ridge, would also experience growth but not nearly as extensive as that evident within the CMA. Although promotion of compact and complete communities precludes rapid growth in these areas it is primarily geographic restraints, such as steep slopes on the North Shore, seismic and flooding hazards in Richmond, and distance in Maple Ridge, that would have the greatest limiting effect.

As noted above, considerable growth would be channelled into the existing metropolitan core, regional town centres, and other urban concentrations. Although the metropolitan core, which is defined as Vancouver's Downtown Peninsula and the West Broadway corridor, would experience a loss of its regional housing (5.6% in 1991, 4.7 in 2021), population (3.3% and 2.6%), and employment (19.5% and 12.7%) shares, the regional town centres located within the CMA would see their regional shares increased, measured both individually and collectively. For example, as a group their regional share of housing would increase from 8.7% (1991) to 17.5% (1992). Similarly, regional share of

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and 124,000 jobs would be created.

population (8.6% to 16.7%) and employment (8.3% to 16.8%) would increase.

The Livable Region Plan, if it is ever successfully adopted and implemented, would not likely have the legislative backing to require local community plans to conform to it. Rather, it would only offer a long-term perspective and serve as a guide to municipalities when updating their plans. With no assurances that the local plans would conform, attainment of the growth targets identified in the CMA option is questionable. The GVRD has undertaken a comparative analysis of the long-term growth implications of the regional plan against existing local plans. This analysis revealed "that when plans are revised within the Compact Metropolitan Area, they [would] be revised to reflect the more compact nature of this portion of the region" (GVRD 1993b, 38). In some instances, however, revisions may not achieve a level of compactness intended by the GVRD in the CMA option. For example, in the Vancouver / UEL sub-area 12% fewer residential units would be created than targeted by the CMA option, and 60% more than current plans in the North East sector. Generally though, "the magnitude of development contemplated in communities within the region ... can be accommodated within the currently existing planning capacities" (GVRD 1993b, 38).

### 10.3.3 *Transport 2021 - Improving Long-Term Regional Mobility*

During the time that the GVRD has been developing and refining the *Livable Region Strategic Plan*, it has, in cooperation with the provincial Ministry of Transportation and Highways,<sup>48</sup> also been studying the implications of future population growth on region-

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<sup>48</sup> Membership of the Transport 2021 study group consists of nine representatives from the Province and local governments.

wide transportation. This work will culminate in a regional transportation strategy, the *Long-Range Transportation Plan (Transport 2021)*, that is firmly grounded in the values and vision of *Creating Our Future*. The two work programs represent the first time in British Columbia that regional land-use and transportation planning have been done together by provincial and regional officials "within an agreed context of values and goals" (Kellas 1992).

Impetus for the study came from two directions. First, the increasing reliance of the region's residents on their private automobiles and, second, the over-burdening of the region's transportation systems. Rather than focus on traditional "engineering" responses to the region's transportation ills, such as building more roads and bridges, *Transport 2021* proposes less costly and more long-term strategies such as: land-use controls and regulations; transportation demand management; and, improved transit service and increased capacity.

In an effort to reduce the use of private automobiles various Transportation Demand Management (TDM) strategies have also been explored. The over-riding goal of TDM is to change individual travel behaviour. The GVRD has identified three categories of TDM for consideration: reducing the number of trips; discouraging the use of single-occupant automobiles and encouraging the use of alternatives; and, reducing peak-hour trips. Both "carrots" (i.e., incentives such as priority bus and carpooling lanes) and "sticks" (i.e., disincentives such as higher parking charges for single-occupant commuters, bridge tolls, higher gas taxes, and requirements for large employers to implement programs to reduce the number of vehicle trips to their work sites (GVRD 1993d; GVRD 1992d) fall into each of these categories. Studies have revealed that "sticks" would be most effective but as yet the

GVRD has not assessed the public's acceptance of these (GVRD 1993d). A balanced TDM program can have noticeable effects on the region's transportation future including:

1. Reducing the number of vehicles on the road, especially single-occupant commuters that result in heavily congested peak-driving hours. It is estimated that between one-third and one-half of the growth in auto trips could be eliminated;
2. Decreasing total numbers of people travelling in peak hours;
3. Increasing the total numbers of people using public transit;
4. Increasing overall usage of public transit;
5. Decreasing total distances travelled in all vehicle-types;
6. Increasing, by as much as 50%, the distances travelled by people using public transit;
7. Decreasing, by as much as 20%, the amount of capital expenditures on transportation-related infrastructure; and
8. Decreasing total quantity of atmospheric pollutants (GVRD 1992d, GVRD 1993d).

Besides getting people out of their private automobiles, effective TDM can "delay or reduce road construction which might otherwise be required [and] cut pollution from vehicles by reducing the amount of vehicle travel" (GVRD 1992c).

Regardless of its merits TDM will not solve all of the region's transportation problems. Considerable efforts will be required in other areas, such as the construction of additional capacity. Nor is TDM cheap and easy to implement. Extra transit and road capacity bring with them substantial price tags, while implementation will require the

cooperative efforts of numerous agencies, government bodies, and the public. Ultimately, its success will be dependent on public acceptance and their willingness to change travel habits. Without either of these regional transportation difficulties will continue to grow.

On the surface it would appear the GVRD, through the *Choosing Our Future Program*, are headed in the right direction, namely the preservation of livability in Greater Vancouver and the management of growth. The region's residents have sent a strong and clear message of their desire to "protect our outstanding quality of life and natural environment" (GVRD 1992g, 2). According to Reid (1992), an extensive public participation program has successfully vaulted livability into the public discourse. In spite of this progress, Rashleigh (1992, 34) argues that the program has not generated the level of "massive popular support needed to ensure political commitment to significant change."<sup>49</sup> At the centre of this deficiency is the need to re-evaluate regional governance. Without it, or the considerable support of local municipalities, it is unlikely that the "steps" to a more livable region arising from public discuss will ever be realized. In this case, it is unlikely that Greater Vancouver's livability will remain intact.

The future of the *Livable Region Strategic Plan*, which the GVRD expects to have completed late in 1993, is precarious at best because of the GVRD's mandate that limits it to "regional district development services" and that does not afford it the legislative authority to implement a regional plan and to ensure that member municipalities abide by it. As a result of *Creating Our Future* Action No. 52, which calls for a "review of the need for renewed GVRD regional land-use, transportation and social development mandates" (GVRD

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<sup>49</sup> Critics of the program argue that the entire process, regardless of the GVRD's best intentions, was distant from the average citizen and very much "top-heavy."

1990a, 26), the GVRD has been working with local governments and the Province in order to improve their mandate and to develop "a consensus-based model for an improved regional planning mandate" (GVRD 1992g, 1). A model has been developed and has proved relatively effective in establishing the goals and objective of the regional plan. But the same problem, evident since 1983, remains: the GVRD does not have the capacity to ensure the full compliance of local governments with the plan.

#### 10.4. The Agricultural Land Reserve - Stopping Urban Sprawl?

The impetus for the establishment of a province-wide agricultural land reserve was the unprecedented consumption of prime agricultural land that, by the early 1970s, amounted to approximately 6,000 hectares per year (B.C.'s Agricultural Land Commission 1993). Rather than resort to established strategies such as land banks, purchase of development rights, the NDP provincial government of the early 1970s "decided to maintain a single, consistent approach to preserving agricultural land by establishing the Provincial Agricultural Land Commission" (Ibid., 8).

The first steps taken towards establishing a land reserve came in 1972 with the passage of orders-in-council numbers 4483 and 157, to stop, or freeze, the subdivision of farmland. This was followed by further government action in 1973 to prohibit the changing of use of these lands. Undaunted by the considerable outcry that these actions spawned, the NDP government proceeded to take additional legislative action against the further loss of agricultural land by introducing and passing the *Land Commission Act*. The *Act*, besides providing the legal backing to preserve farmland, greenbelts, land banks and parkland, promoted farming as a viable economic activity and established the Provincial Agricultural

Land Commission (PALC). In 1977 the Act's name was formally changed to the *Agricultural Land Commission Act*. Accompanying this change was a restricted mandate focusing mainly on the preservation of agricultural land, but which also included encouraging the establishment and maintenance of farms and the use of lands designated for agricultural in an appropriate manner.

The most significant action of the Provincial Agricultural Land Commission was the establishment of the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR). Intended as the primary mechanism to preserve agricultural land, it was established through a combined technical and consultative process designed to identify the best farmlands and to develop and ratify plans for each of the province's regional districts. Regional districts and member municipalities were provided ample opportunities to review and modify their plans to accommodate regional and local land reserves. The provincial Cabinet did, however, have final approval on the location and extent of the ALR. By the end of 1974, 23 of 28 regional districts had plans identifying ALRs. The remaining regional districts had their plans by 1976.<sup>50</sup> In whole, the province's ALR accounted for approximately 4.7 million hectares, or about 5% of the province's land mass (Ibid.).

The official designation of the ALR did not, however, put an end to threats to the province's agricultural lands. Since its inception, a substantial amount of PALC's workload has been consumed by processing in excess of 30,000 applications for the removal of land

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<sup>50</sup> With the approval of all of the regional district's plans the 'freeze' on agricultural lands originally introduced in 1972 was lifted.



from the ALR for the purpose of either subdivision or to establish non-conforming uses.<sup>51</sup> Secondary, but still important, functions include refining ALR boundaries, ensuring consistency of local community plans and bylaws with the Province's floodlands policy, ensuring that initiatives of other government agencies and departments coincide with the ALR, and reviewing local government land-use plans and zoning bylaws. These proactive activities help in identifying, avoiding and mediating potential conflicts and maintaining the integrity of the ALR. In an effort to promote and support farming as a viable economic activity PALC has also focused on the elimination and control of land-use conflicts between farms and non-agricultural uses.

The establishment of the Agricultural Land Reserve was thought to represent a fundamental shift in the perception of agricultural land. No longer was agricultural land to be simply regarded as a "repository for any number of non-farm uses" (Plotnikoff 1993, 4) nor as a land reserve for future growth and development, but rather, as a high quality, scarce, productive land resource best suited for the production of food. Reality does not show this to be the case however. Many people and institutions still hold the view that the ALR is nothing more than a land reserve for future growth and development. Today, it is not uncommon for local governments, during their five year OCP review, to request PALC to release land from the ALR "because they have 'run out' of land or may have poorly used some of their land base and now want a larger 'sandbox' in which to accommodate future growth projections" (Ibid., 4). Often these requests are rationalized as being necessary to maintain a land supply for a period of "transition" from the "business-as-usual" urban

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<sup>51</sup> In recent years the numbers of applications have been increasing at a steady rate. Recent estimations of the number of applications per annum range from 1,200 (B.C.'s Agricultural Land Commission 1993) to 1,600 (Wanless 1993a).

development process to new urban growth strategies that promise to reduce pressures on the ALR. Since the ALR's inception few local governments have followed through on bold promises to establish and maintain a strict urban containment area that would stop the spread of development into the ALR. Plotnikoff (1993, 5) argues that this scenario, that has been replayed countless times in the past and is gaining in frequency, is the consequence of "a continuing perception, that our agricultural resource is simply 'vacant' land being held or banked until it is considered needed for urban, industrial or infrastructure use."

A review of PALC's record reveals admirable progress towards fulfilling its mandate of preserving agricultural land throughout the province. In the years immediately preceding its creation, prime agricultural land was being lost at a rate of approximately 6,000 hectares per year. Today, the provincial rate of loss has dropped substantially to fewer than 700 hectares per year (B.C.'s Agricultural Land Commission 1993). Over a period of 20 years only 103,000 hectares of the originally designated 4.7 million hectares of land have been excluded from the reserve, representing only 2.2% of the total (Ibid.). The rosy picture painted by these figures overlook the fact that up to one-third of the land that has been removed was high quality (Wilson and Pierce 1982).<sup>52</sup>

A vital and unthreatened ALR can do much towards the preservation of Greater Vancouver's livability. It can play an integral role in achieving a balance between built and natural environments, restricting urban sprawl and channelling it into non-ALR areas, producing more efficient settlement and service patterns, and increasing the visual and

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<sup>52</sup> Of the lands removed from the ALR, 77% was not considered as 'prime' land but was instead classified as having secondary agricultural capability (i.e., Classes 4 through 7) (B.C.'s Agricultural Land Commission 1993).

aesthetic value of the region. But for these benefits to accrue it is necessary the ALR remain intact. Recent evidence shows that this may not be the case however. While the removal of land from the ALR across the province has slowed considerably since the 1970s the record in the Lower Mainland is not as impressive. As in the past, urban encroachment remains the ALR's primary threat. In the Lower Mainland, where 1.1% of the province's best agricultural land is located, a quantity of land equivalent in size to Vancouver City has been removed or is in the process of being removed from the ALR in order to feed growing space requirements (Plotnikoff 1993).

PALC recently undertook a study of the Lower Mainland's long-term urban land reserve (i.e., non-farmland designated for urban development) to determine if there was indeed sufficient land of this sort to meet future growth requirements without having to resort to use of the ALR. This study indicated that there were "considerable opportunities for urban growth within the Lower Mainland, without urbanizing the Agricultural Land Reserve" (Plotnikoff 1993, 5). This conclusion assumed that existing urbanized land would be used more efficiently through higher density redevelopment and infill, and the use of currently identified urban reserve, and other non-ALR rural lands.<sup>53</sup> This would only become reality if local governments show a willingness to use these lands efficiently or adopt and support new development strategies in their OCPs.

In the 1990s, the provincial NDP government has taken an important step towards reaffirming the integrity of the ALR by placing moratoriums on the removal of land from the ALR, specifically in the case of golf courses. But in the urban-rural fringe there is still

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<sup>53</sup> It was estimated that the current urban reserve contains over 22,000 hectares, most of which is located in the GVRD, while non-ALR rural lands accounts for over 18,000 hectares (Plotnikoff 1993).

considerable pressures on the ALR primarily as a result of speculators searching for profits generated from a redesignated land-use. These pressures can only be stopped, and the integrity of the ALR can only be preserved, if both provincial and local government consistently makes decisions in favour of the ALR.

A strong and vital ALR is one of the cornerstones of livability in Greater Vancouver, however, its long-term integrity is highly dependent on a change in attitudes towards it. It can no longer be seen as a receptacle for additional growth, but rather a new understanding must evolve that "the urbanization of the ALR is *not* inevitable and that the preservation of our agricultural resource is a necessary context within which the planning for urban growth must be undertaken" (Plotnikoff 1992, 6). In the short term, the ALR must be protected from further threats of physical encroachment. The *Creating Our Future Program* is encouraging because the importance of maintaining the ALR as part of a regional green zone was clearly identified. Desires to preserve Greater Vancouver's livability will hopefully translate into stronger calls for protection of the ALR.

#### 10.5. The Regional Town Centre Strategy

As previously discussed in this chapter, the concept of regional town centres (RTCs) was originally introduced in the *Livable Region Strategy Plan*, where they were described as:

...important links in the existing and developing regional transportation system and they are expected to provide a range of employment, shopping and cultural facilities appropriate to their surrounding areas. A wider range of residential densities is encouraged around regional centres, but special emphasis is given to medium and high density development in close proximity to regional centres (GVRD 1993f, 12).

It is argued that the focusing of additional growth and population into a limited number of strategic centres would improve a rapidly deteriorating regional transportation system and worsening gridlock by creating opportunities for a more efficient transit system. Furthermore, a well-developed regional town centres would produce a more efficient regional land-use pattern if they were to evolve as the focus of economic, social, cultural, educational, and housing activities. Other expected benefits cited by proponents of RTCs included: reduced development pressures in the Green Zone; support for major transit infrastructure investments; creation of more self-sufficient communities; greater range of services and amenities available to suburban residents; and, promoting stronger community spirit and the building of community identity (GVRD 1993a). It is for these reasons that the development of RTCs is regarded as one of the fundamental building blocks of a livable region. The overriding objective of RTCs, as a policy direction, is the control of growth pressures and "activities that seek decentralized locations and [to] accommodate them in centres, as opposed to a multitude of dispersed locations" (GVRD 1993f, 8).

To fulfil these lofty expectations designated RTCs would have to exemplify several basic qualities including:

1. *Strong Pedestrian Orientation.* Activities and facilities should be within comfortable walking distance of one another and located in a pleasing and interesting street-level environment;
2. *Mixture of Activities.* The centre should be alive with many different activities from morning to night. It should not be dominated by one activity, such as office parks or shopping centres but should instead offer a widely varied but balanced mix; and

3. *Human Scale.* Buildings should not give people a 'boxed-in' feeling nor should they block the sun or views. (GVRD 1993f, 9)

Within this environmental context, individual RTCs would provide between 2,000 - 3,000 dwelling units and contain sufficient services, retail areas, etc. to serve a population of between 100,000 and 150,000 people. Their land masses would not exceed 259 hectares (640 acres) while its pedestrian-oriented core should not be more than 20 hectares (50 acres) and 600 meters (1969 feet) in radius.

While local governments assume the primary responsibility for nurturing and developing individual RTCs, the GVRD assumes the equally important role of developing a functioning regional system, or hierarchy, of centres, including RTCs, that would provide "a regional framework for the actions of municipalities and other agencies so that they will help each other achieve their community development aspirations" (GVRD 1993g, 5). Additionally, a well-defined and strong hierarchy will help to alleviate mounting pressures on the region's dwindling land supply while at the same time limiting "the trend to a dispersal of economic activity in growing metropolitan communities" (Ibid., 8). The envisioned hierarchy would consist of, from smallest to largest, local centres, municipal town centres, regional town centres and valley towns, and a metropolitan core. Greater Vancouver's metropolitan core, situated at the top of the hierarchy, is comprised of the City of Vancouver's existing downtown core.<sup>54</sup> Local centres and municipal centres, although they differ in scale, are predominantly focused around historical commercial and service

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<sup>54</sup> The GVRD defines the metropolitan core as the Vancouver's Downtown, West End, False Creek, and the Central Broadway area. The core is the predominant business and commercial location within the hierarchy because of its highly specialized commercial, tourism, cultural, sports, entertainment, service, and institutional activities.

areas, such as regional shopping malls and downtown "mainstreets." Examples of existing regional shopping malls are Lougheed and Park Royal, while Port Moody, White Rock and Newton represent examples of downtowns. A pedestrian focus is a key identifying element of each of these. In comparison to regional town centres, these centres play a less pivotal regional role but, nonetheless, an important local role.

Since the 1970s, a total of 12 regional town centres and valley towns have been identified as centres of regional significance and have subsequently been encouraged to develop in an appropriate manner.<sup>55</sup> In comparison to centres located lower in the hierarchy, regional centres provide an expanded range of commercial and services opportunities and public amenities that serve a larger population and as a focus for a broad geographic area. An important feature of RTCs is external transit linkages, but within their boundaries a strong pedestrian environment is encouraged.

While it has been relatively straight-forward task to develop a conceptual foundation for RTCs, experiences from past years have shown the complexity of actually creating them, and specifically, the difficulty in coordinating the public policy decisions and investment decisions of the public, three levels of government, and the private sector. These barriers have generally limited progress towards the creation of a strong and vital system of regional town centres.

The successfulness of the town centre strategy, in terms of achieving their goals and

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<sup>55</sup> Identified regional town centres include Burnaby's Metrotown, Coquitlam Centre, Downtown New Westminster, North Vancouver's Lonsdale, Richmond Centre, and Surrey City Centre (located in Whalley). Identified valley centres include Abbotsford/Clearbrook, Aldergrove, Chilliwack, Haney, Langley, and Mission. Recently, the desire to develop a "complete" hierarchy of centres has generated discussions on the need for another regional core, similar in scale and scope to Vancouver's downtown peninsula, south of the Fraser River (GVRD 1992a).

objectives and fulfilling expectations, can be ascertained from recent development trends in the Greater Vancouver area. Specifically, measures of the growth and change of commercial/office and residential development provides useful insights into their performance. Recent observations indicate that, on a whole, Greater Vancouver's office structure is reasonably centralized, primarily in downtown Vancouver, but it is equally clear that much of the region's office inventory is decentralized in the suburbs. Similarly, new commercial floorspace has tended towards dispersion, although significant quantities have located in existing commercial precincts as a result of intensive redevelopment. In terms of residential development, RTCs have been the focus of a relatively high proportion of the region's high density development. When population is considered in relation to jobs and housing opportunities the performance of RTCs becomes clearer. In 1991, a surplus of jobs to population was found in Vancouver's downtown, a balance in the RTCs, and a surplus of population in other centres, valley towns, and areas outside centres (GVRD 1993f). In sum, these observations suggest that the strategy of focusing growth and development towards RTCs has been moderately successful to date, but a much higher degree of concentration of development, jobs, and population is required if they are to develop into the urban environments originally envisioned. Observations also indicate that the promotion of RTCs has not abated sprawl, traffic congestion, etc..

Regardless of regional town centre's great potential and stature as cornerstones of a regional growth management strategy, their critics have often referred to them as little more than "glorified suburban shopping centres, dominated by blank walls and expansive parking." (FPA 1991, 7). The ultimate success of the regional town centre strategy will depend on how well the key players can "develop the [required] quality, quantity and



diversity of jobs, services and activities" (Ibid., 7).

#### 10.6. A Social Agenda for Growth Management

While the GVRD's preparations for future growth in Greater Vancouver have primarily focused on physical settlement patterns and transportation, the social implications of future growth and how social issues relate to land-use and transportation issues has not been overlooked. Population will not only grow in real numbers but will also diversify in terms of demographic composition. The later changes have been evident for several decades but are expected to intensify. Notable changes include: increasing ethnic diversity; increasingly diverse family structure as the traditional family is replaced by an assortment of non-traditional family units such as single-parent families and non-family households; an aging population; continued poverty; and, a shifting labour market away from resource and industrial sectors towards services industries (GVRD 1990b).

Each of these changes will have dramatic repercussions on the demands placed on already over-burdened social services, but also less obviously on Greater Vancouver's urban geography as the geographic distribution of these changes will be significantly different from those previously experienced. This later situation will be most noticeable in the case of an aging population as the numbers of people aged 65 or more is expected to increase by 199,928 between 1991 and 2016 (GVRD 1993e). Nearly 65% of this growth is expected to occur in the outlying communities of Langley, the South Fraser, and the North East Sector. Approximately 30% will occur in the inner communities of Richmond, Burnaby and the North Shore, with the remainder in the City of Vancouver. These are problematic trends because the areas expected to receive the greatest numbers of seniors are those least

prepared to attend to their complex needs, while areas that are prepared, such as the City of Vancouver, will receive the least number of seniors. Similar redistributions are expected in the case of the other noted variables. In general, Greater Vancouver's suburban communities that have historically been demographically dominated by single family households "will experience remarkable increased in ethnic diversity, age composition, income, and household composition" (Ibid., 14).

These trends have significant ramifications on the planning and organization of the region and its urbanized areas that, as the GVRD argues, will necessitate a complete rethinking of future growth management activities and initiatives, and transportation planning. The GVRD identifies four key areas where this will be required. These are:

1. *Urban Form and Design.* Good urban form and design represents a basic mechanism to develop complete communities characterized by important qualities such as belonging, stability, and security, integration and interaction, identity, community ownership, and pride. The focus of good urban design should be the elimination of barriers that are often evident in contemporary urban environments and which separate dependent groups, such as the elderly and single-parent families, from necessary human services. As populations grow and diversify in the future, accepted elements of the traditional North American suburban community, such as low density development, a strong automobile orientation, separation of land-uses, must be reconsidered;
2. *Increased Densities.* Increased urban densities offer many opportunities to address social needs. Well planned and designed higher density living environments can positively reinforce community identity, promote greater

social interaction, and provide easier access to, and delivery of, basic community facilities and services. As well, market and rental affordable housing and public amenities are easier to provide, and the cost of expensive public infrastructure is reduced. To accrue these benefits, higher density must be carefully planned both temporally and physically or the intensification of land-uses may result in a dangerous combination of overcrowding, insufficient facilities and services, and poor design;

3. *Transit Planning.* Transportation systems must adapt to meet the service demands of a changing and diversifying population. In the future, greater numbers of elderly, youth and lower income families suggest the need for greater emphasis on public transit. Failure to made positive changes in the types of, and delivery of, transit services may result in increased isolation, decreased access to community services and facilities, and greater reliance on the private automobile which is becoming increasingly costly to operate; and
4. *Facility and Service Planning.* Community facilities and services are generally in short supply and rarely keep pace with population growth and increased demand. As Greater Vancouver experiences rapid population growth in coming decades and access to fiscal resources becomes tighter, the gap between supply and demand will be further widened, especially in critical areas of child care and the facilities and services designed for the elderly and the multicultural population (Ibid.).

Interestingly, the GVRD's analysis of future social needs clearly supports their preferred growth management strategy of a Compact Metropolitan Area. They conclude

that the social needs of Greater Vancouver's population will be best addressed through: the promotion of compact urban development; a network of urban villages; focusing growth into existing core urban areas (described as the cities of Vancouver, Burnaby and Richmond) and into rapid growth suburbs south of the Fraser River and in the North East Sector; promoting a hierarchy of urban centres; creating transit oriented developments; and achieving a better balance between the public's transportation needs and local transit service (Ibid., 2-3).

Although important, emphasis on a new, people-friendly physical environment will not ensure that the region's social needs are fully attended to. As suggested by Witty (1992), other more complicated and sensitive factors such as the focus of regional planning, regional visions, community consultation, intersectoral governance and decision making, and regional co-ordination must be addressed if social needs are to be addressed in a manner which enhances the livability of the region.

Although the GVRD has begun to look at the social implications of livability critics argue that they are still far from affecting positive change (FPA 1991). At the heart of this criticism is their perceived inability to "take decisive action" due in part to their limited mandate, but more importantly, due to the GVRD Directors reluctance to make decisions from a regional perspective that may conflict with the interests of the local level.

#### 10.7. The Air Quality Management Plan - "Breathin' Easier"

Regional air quality has been a public concern for many years as pollution levels directly attributable to industry and fossil fuel burning vehicles have kept pace with the significant economic and population growth that the region has experienced. The region's

geography intensifies the air quality problem as the mountains located to the north and southeast (in Washington State) restrict air movement, that when combined with particular weather conditions such as temperature inversions, create an extremely unhealthy situation. A recent GVRD study of emissions revealed that in 1985 approximately 605,000 tonnes of primary pollutants (defined as nitrogen oxides, sulphur oxides, carbon monoxide, volatile organic compounds and particulates) were emitted into the atmosphere (GVRD 1992f). Of this total, 53.6% (324,100 tonnes) was directly attributable to light duty motor vehicles, 33.1% (200,400 tonnes) to other mobile sources, such as heavy duty trucks, road dust, trains, planes, ships etc., 7.7% (46,600 tonnes) to industrial (point) sources, and 4.6% (27,500 tonnes) to area sources. This inventory clearly showed that motor vehicles represent the greatest threat to a clean regional air supply.<sup>56</sup>

The GVRD, which is mandated to manage air quality and regulate commercial and industrial air emissions under provisions of British Columbia's *Waste Management Act*, has, since 1988, been working on a regional air quality plan. Entitled the *Air Quality Management Plan (AQMP)*, it addresses improved regional air quality by outlining policy directions, strategies, and air quality standards. Since the region's air pollution problem is attributable to a number of different source-types, including industrial, commercial and residential activities, and transportation, the plan has necessarily had to be both broad-based and inclusive. Therefore, specific strategies have been identified to reduce pollution originating from point sources, area sources, and various types of vehicles.

Interest in the plan grew in 1990 with the adoption of the *Creating Our Future*

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<sup>56</sup> Motorized vehicles are the source of 90% of carbon monoxide, 64% of nitrogen oxides, and 54% of volatile organic compounds released into the GVRD's air (GVRD 1992f).

*Action Plan* that stressed the importance of high regional air quality, and which stated as an objective the reduction "by 50 percent the total emissions of sulphur and nitrogen oxides, particulates, carbon monoxide and volatile compounds by the year 2000" (Ibid., 1). The highly dependent relationship between air quality and land-use and transportation necessitates that the *AQMP* has been developed in association with the *Livable Region Strategic Plan* and with *Transport 2021*.

To date the GVRD has done much to further their mandate of improving the region's air quality. Besides completing an assessment of current regional air quality and projections of air quality to 2005, it has recently released a report identifying potential options to reduce emissions. With the passage of the *Air Quality Management Bylaw* by the GVRD Board in July, 1992 "a foundation for realizing the air quality goals contained in *Creating Our Future* and providing the necessary funding for delivering new air quality initiatives" (GVRD undated, 1) was secured. This bylaw affects major polluters by requiring operation permits and the levying of fees, to be calculated on the principle of the "polluter pays", that would be channelled back into the air quality management program. Motorized vehicles were not addressed in the bylaw as it was expected that transportation control measures developed as part of the *Transport 2021* program would suffice. As well, the Province's *AirCare* program would help to reduce tailpipe emissions.

The future and effectiveness of the GVRD's efforts to improve regional air quality is difficult to determine at this time. The development of the *AQMP* is a positive sign that the issue is being taken seriously and that real efforts are being made to improve regional air quality, notwithstanding the need to accomplish this in order to meet provincial and federal air quality standards. It is troublesome that the *AQMP* does not directly address

emissions from motorized vehicles, that clearly are the greatest threat to regional air quality, and instead defers this critical detail to *Transport 2021*. This program, although useful and needed, is suspect because of the uncertainty associated with its implementation that, once the public realizes the implications of its proposed incentives and disincentives designed to effort to get people out of their cars, will be jeopardized. The long-term success of the plan and other regional initiatives is ultimately dependent on how willing the business community, local governments, and the public are to make possibly radical changes in how they conduct business, and most significantly, in how residents, who are notoriously resistant to change, lead their day-to-day lives. Until this becomes more apparent will it be possible to offer a reasonable assessment of future prospects of regional air quality.

#### 10.8. Summary

The preceding review reveals that much effort has been expended on preserving Greater Vancouver's livability. Some of the pieces may be missing and others may be underdeveloped, but it is clear that the basic elements of a well-rounded strategy to preserve livability are evident: public identification of livability goals and objectives; the beginnings of a strategic regional plan complete with a strategy to manage the physical growth of the urban environment; a transportation strategy to reduce automobile dependence; a vision of a new physical geography, or settlement pattern, for the region; a green zone to halt urban expansion; an understanding of the social ramifications of growth; and the basics of a strategy to enhance regional air quality.

But the presence of these pieces do not, on their own, guarantee that livability will be preserved. Pessimism is appropriate because while each of the pieces are, to a certain

extent, dependent on each other there is nothing holding them together. That is, an official, binding, and comprehensive regional plan or strategy does not exist to provide the necessary direction and purpose not only to the region's municipalities but also to all of the elements of a successful growth management program.

The GVRD's most recent attempts to develop a strategic regional plan are laudable and important but are nonetheless insufficient as the final product will only serve a loose guidepost to steer local municipalities in the right direction from a regional perspective. Because the GVRD does not have the legislative powers to undertake regional planning, and therefore to develop a regional plan that is binding, area municipalities are not obligated to adhere to the plan unless they so desire or if it is in their best interest. The GVRD has made significant, and even remarkable, strides using a consensus building approach but it will fail when the time comes to implement the plan that, if it is to effectively deal with regional growth, will undoubtedly require local governments to go in directions previously unknown and to make difficult and unpopular decisions.

For the GVRD to implement a plan that is binding and effective requires, at minimum, the restoration of its regional planning powers and specifically those authorizing the creation and implementation of a regional plan. Not since the early 1980s have these powers been available to the GVRD and it is highly improbable that they will be returned in the near future as the authority to do this resides with the provincial government which has made no real attempts to do this. The responsibility, therefore, lies with the region's residents to vocally impress upon the government that livability and quality of life are important enough to make bold decisions and that their preservation is paramount. If this occurs, then there is a chance that the region's livability will be preserved in perpetuity.



## CHAPTER 11

### A GROWTH MANAGEMENT STRATEGY FOR GREATER VANCOUVER

#### 11.1. Introduction

Previous chapters have reviewed the growth pressures evident in Greater Vancouver and have argued the need for a coordinated regional growth management strategy to address the resulting problems. In addition, the on-going efforts of the GVRD to address regional growth have been reviewed. While progress has been made by the GVRD in the growth management arena, it is still unclear whether the goal of preserving the region's livability will be achieved. This chapter identifies the changes which are necessary at the institutional level (governance and organizational structure, etc.) in order to set the stage for an effective growth management strategy at the regional level. A comprehensive, regionally-based growth management framework is then forged from the analysis contained in earlier chapters. Finally, this chapter provides direction for the regional land-use plan and individual local comprehensive plans which will need to be developed in accordance with this strategy.

#### 11.2. Setting the Stage for Growth Management

Since the 1970s, much effort and attention has been directed towards controlling growth and preserving Greater Vancouver's livability. The GVRD's *Livable Region Program*, centring around a unique and unorthodox public process, culminated in a common

vision for the region, supporting goals and objectives, and the first regional plan -- *The Livable Region Proposals: 1976-86* -- since the Lower Mainland Regional Planning Board's plans of the 1960s. The plan fell well short of its lofty expectations by faltering before it could be implemented (see section 10.2. for explanations of its demise). It would not be until over ten years later that the GVRD would once again tackle regional growth and livability issues when it initiated the program in the late 1980s. As with its predecessor, the focus of *Choosing Our Future* was the preservation of Greater Vancouver's livability and meeting the challenges presented by rapid growth. The program's foundation was a broad-based public process designed to inform the public, generate feedback, and generate consensus. The process confirmed, as had the *Livable Region Plan*, that the preservation of livability is a vital regional issue and a concern of a significant proportion of the region's population. From the public consultation process evolved a list of five priority issues regarded as requiring immediate attention: maintaining a healthy environment; conserving the land resource; severing a changing population; maintaining the region's economic health; and, managing the region (GVRD 1990a). From these five theme areas, 54 action steps (later reduced to 36) were subsequently identified.

Recently, the GVRD has focused on the development of a regional plan -- *The Livable Region Strategic Plan* -- to represent the medium for regional growth management. Through the process of developing the plan, within the context of high levels of livability and environmental integrity, scenarios of future growth and development patterns have been explored. The four key tenets on which the plan is based are: protecting the green zone; building complete communities; achieving a compact metropolitan region; and, increasing transportation choice.

Concurrent with this work, the GVRD, in cooperation with the Ministry of Transportation and Highways, has been involved with the *Transport 2021* project to study and identify the transportation requirements (i.e., transportation demand management strategies and transportation infrastructure) necessary to support broader growth management strategies. This partnership represents the first time in the GVRD's history that land-use planning and transportation planning have been coordinated and undertaken concurrently. Together, *The Livable Region Strategic Plan* and *Transport 2021*, will "create an integrated regional plan for the GVRD" (GVRD 1993j, 19).

Once the GVRD's regional plan and the *Transport 2021* project are finalized and adopted, the focus will turn to their implementation. Ultimately, the ability of each of these to secure a livable future for the Greater Vancouver region will depend on how successful the GVRD is at the daunting and complex task of implementation, and how well it can manoeuvre around the many obstacles and impediments that it will encounter. Without the ability to resort to mandated planning powers, the GVRD has been forced to utilize a partnership approach that has, until this point, served them well. The GVRD describes the partnership, or consensus, approach to implementation as follows:

This approach empowers the GVRD to enter into contractual and cooperative arrangements with municipalities, other regional districts, provincial ministries and agencies, and federal agencies to achieve the implementation of the regional plan. Partnership respects municipal autonomy in land-use planning and provides a basis for dispute resolution by mutual consent in cases where the official community plans do not comply with the regional plan. There would be little scope or need for a more formal dispute resolution process (Ibid. 24).

It is clear that the GVRD recognizes the limitations and difficulties associated with the approach when it states:

The partnership-basis planning approach poses major challenges because organizations may vary in the degree to which they share the vision; it may take considerable time to establish some partnerships; some organizations may choose not to participate; and new trends and issues may arise during the process (Ibid. 25).

Regardless of these shortcomings, the GVRD is insistent that the approach can adequately serve its purposes if the following conditions are evident in the future:

1. The region's residents radically alter their lifestyles by driving the single-occupant vehicles less often and accepting more compact, diverse communities for their homes;
2. The GVRD manages public assets in a fiscally-prudent manner and delivers high-quality public programs;
3. Consistency exists between the regional plan and those of member municipalities;
4. A strong, voluntary partnership between the GVRD, other regional districts, and member municipalities that are planning for their own needs;
5. A strong voluntary partnership between the GVRD and other organizations that share the *Choosing Our Future* vision and provincial authorities on issues, such as transit and highways expenditures, environmental protection, and Georgia Basin-Puget Sound initiatives; and
6. A strong voluntary partnership between the GVRD and other organizations and the Federal Governments on port, airport and other facility issues and various environmental protection actions related, such as the *Fraser River Estuary Management Program* (Ibid. 24-25).

A cursory glance at the GVRD's "wish list" reveals that only one of the six

conditions is under their direct control -- the second -- while the remainder are largely beyond their immediate capacity to significantly influence and are heavily reliant on the "good will" of other involved parties. Voluntary cooperation has served the GVRD well to this point in time. But by contending that the partnership approach can work if these conditions are evident, the GVRD is putting into serious question their ability to successfully implement and sustain the regional plan, and to secure long-term livability in the Greater Vancouver region.

Beyond concerns stemming from the GVRD's reliance on the partnership approach to implementation there exist other, more deeply rooted concerns associated with the institutional environment in which it is attempting to introduce its regional growth management program. These concerns, individually or collectively, have the ability to jeopardize the long- and short-term success of growth management in Greater Vancouver, or at minimum, severely curtail its effectiveness. These are:

1. *Ineffectual Governance and Organizational Structures.* Current thought is that existing governance and organization structures are inappropriate, and may even work against, the preservation of regional livability. Greater Vancouver's fragmented and uncoordinated governmental structures have been described as impractical, "with inefficient decision-making, significant duplication of effort and waste of resources" (VBT 1991, 1). Furthermore, critics argue that it is not "accountable to, understood, [or] supported by its residents" (FPA 1991, 9). In sum, current governance and organizational structures are ill-prepared to address complex growth and livability issues at the regional level in a systematic, functional, and positive manner;

2. *Lack of a Strong Regional Authority.* Since the loss of their regional land-use planning powers in the early 1980s, the GVRD has essentially been relegated to that of an administrator of services. Without stronger, pervasive, and formalized powers (for example, the legislated authority to develop and implement regional plans and to ensure their compliance) the GVRD's ability to affect positive change and secure regional livability is significantly curtailed. Lack of these powers forces the GVRD to rely on the voluntary cooperation of member municipalities, which as shown above, may not occur to the extent required to address complex regional growth issues. Additionally, the GVRD's existing jurisdiction, which stops at the Pitt River, does not include high growth areas to the east of this point that should be included in its boundaries;
3. *Lack of Strong Regional and Provincial Leadership.* Past experiences in British Columbia and Ontario clearly indicate the importance of strong guidance and leadership from the provincial government in any attempts at broad-based, regional growth management. The success of these initiatives are directly related to the support and commitment afforded them by the government, its ministries and agencies, and the extent to which it actively participates in the process. To date, British Columbia's provincial government has not sufficiently exhibited these qualities; and
4. *Lack of Broad-Based Public Awareness and Support for Growth Management.* Although the GVRD's commitment to public process is laudable, Greater Vancouver's populace largely remains uniformed, and more

importantly, unmotivated. Without broader public support and a clear and strong consensus that immediate action is a priority, it is unlikely that the necessary political support and commitment to affect change will materialize. Currently, public concern over decaying livability has not risen to a critical level where action is demanded, nor is it clear that the public is willing to accept the implications of this action.

Operating within this complex environment, the GVRD has made important strides towards preserving the region's livability in recent years. To date, the GVRD has been able to work around problems within the institutional environment, but as it nears to time to implement the regional plan and the recommendations of *Transport 2021*, the importance of addressing and correcting these problems escalates.

The first priority should be improving the region's governance and organizational structure. The goal of political reform should be to instill "good government" that: ensures that the regional interest prevails where appropriate; balances human needs with environmental needs; represents the needs and opinions of all people in the region; manages growth in cost-effective manner; and addresses the long-term needs of the larger region. Other important characteristics of "good government" are: provincial government support; stronger regional government with clear and broad mandates; and, the active participation of the region's residents in strategy- and decision-making activities.

The Forum for Planning Action (FPA), a non-profit planning thinktank, advances a two-tiered government structure where both levels, local and regional, would be mandated distinct responsibilities. The primary benefit of this structure is that it would be best suited to "develop, administer and evolve the growth management policies" (FPA 1991, 12),

coordinate and support plans, improve relations between governmental bodies, and achieve improved effectiveness.

Since the burden of implementing and coordinating regional growth management rests with the GVRD it is equally imperative that its powers and mandates be updated to reflect its broader responsibilities. At the very minimum, the GVRD requires the restoration of its regional land-use planning powers, including the ability to adopt and implement binding regional plans, with which the plans of member municipalities must conform. In addition, the GVRD must be able to make policy on critical regional issues (e.g., transportation, environmental quality, affordable housing, and regional parks and green belts), to implement this policy, and to ensure full compliance with it. Correcting the jurisdictional problem requires that the GVRD's physical boundaries be expanded to reflect functional realities. As growth issues necessarily dictate a comprehensive approach, it may be prudent to re-establish the boundaries of the 1960s when the Lower Mainland Regional Planning Board maintained influence over the area from Vancouver to Hope. Finally, it is advisable that the provincial government create growth management legislation which would, at minimum, establish the ground-rules, goals, and objectives of growth management.

Greater provincial commitment and support begins with officially acknowledging the *Creating Our Future* vision and ensuring that its ministries and agencies follow suit. Secondly, the province must establish growth management legislation (especially organizational principles) and provide the necessary technical and financial support to ensure that it is effective.

Public support and commitment to growth management is the linchpin that will



ultimately determine the success of a regional growth management program. First and foremost, Greater Vancouver's populace must be intimately involved in the process of implementation of regional growth management. This represents a significant challenge given the disposition of people towards local and neighbourhood issues rather than regional issues. The required scope of public participation can be secured if the following strategies are employed:

1. Direct election of the Regional Council Chairperson and at least half of the Council's members;
2. Regular dissemination of information on regional affairs. An annual State of the Region Report should be considered;
3. Direct regional responsibility for popular concerns such as air pollution control and affordable housing should stimulate popular interest and participation; and
4. Citizen participation should be enhanced by development of both formal and informal regional organizations owned by residents themselves (FPA 1991, 14).

Above all else, the GVRD must send a clear message that they are open and responsive to the public's needs and concerns..

### 11.3. A Growth Management Model for Greater Vancouver

The growth management model outlined in this section builds on and enhances systems which were outlined in previous chapters. The model draws from a variety of Canadian and American experiences and examples. However, the Washington State *Growth*

*Management Act* is used as the primary building block since it is the most comprehensive (and potentially effective) model yet devised. This model is intended to provide a realistic and usable growth management model from political, social, environmental, and economic perspectives. It is comprehensive and integrative in nature and is aimed at balancing local and regional interests and concerns. In general terms, the model is a combination of "top-down" and "bottom-up" processes with a regional focus requiring member jurisdictions to actively promote and support growth management goals and objectives through a set of mutually defined policies and plans.

This model represents a holistic approach to growth management; a means of encouraging regionally beneficial growth. The need for this type of model is evident in the fact that currently a coordinated and systematic regional approach to the management of economic, social, and environmental issues is missing. The GVRD has done an admirable job visualizing the region's future and developing the policies and directions to achieve it. However, without recourse to an integrated and coordinated regional growth management model serving as an umbrella for their policies, programs, and plans, the envisioned future may not materialize - it faces the prospect of seeing the future, but not creating it. Without a comprehensive growth management strategy the GVRD may not have the capacity to translate the *Choosing Our Future* vision into reality, thereby resulting in the continued decline of the region's livability.

#### 11.3.1 *Growth Management Goals and Objectives*

The starting point of a comprehensive growth management program is the establishment of underlying goals and objectives. Multiple goals based on the different

aspects of comprehensive planning set the stage for an integrated approach to growth management. In certain respects, these goals may be contradictory, but they are nonetheless important, as the hallmark of an effective and integrated growth management system lies in achieving a balance between competing objectives.

The overriding objective of growth management in Greater Vancouver is to maintain and improve quality of life. Accordingly, each of the goals listed below represent a necessary element in realizing this objective:

1. Provision of an adequate and varied supply of affordable housing;<sup>57</sup>
2. Protection of the character and integrity of local communities;
3. Revitalization of economically depressed areas;
4. Containment of development and prevention of sprawl;
5. Promotion of strong linkages between land-use and transportation planning to encourage greater regional mobility;
6. Ensuring that infrastructure development keeps pace with demand; and
7. Protection of open space, recreation and important environmental / agricultural areas.

These goals give expression to the five critical livability objectives identified in the GVRD's *Choosing Our Future* program and the associated 36 regional actions proposed in *Steps to a More Livable Region* (GVRD 1993a; 1993b). Within the model, the provincial government is responsible for entrenching these goals with the appropriate legislation.

The proposed growth management goals are not intended to stop or hinder growth.

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<sup>57</sup> Inclusion of provisions for alternative forms of affordable housing configurations is intended to curb an increase in housing prices resulting from policies that lead to the restriction of land supply. This occurrence has been prevalent in other jurisdictions where growth management has been introduced.

Rather, they seek to accommodate growth within the context of protecting the environment, promoting economic prosperity, creating more compact and livable urban environments, improving transportation, and providing adequate infrastructure in a timely and fiscally responsible manner. Thus, the model falls on the growth accommodating side of the growth management spectrum identified in Chapter 3, and can be characterized as a member of the latest generation of strategies. This is in contrast to first or second generation models which focused on restricting growth.

### 11.3.2 *Growth Management Tools*

The complex task of realizing growth management goals and objectives necessitates the employment of effective and efficient tools. A strong Canadian tradition in land-use planning offers the implementors of growth management with a expansive selection of legislated tools -- although there exists a bias towards those of a restrictive nature that needs to be addressed -- and considerable experience in their application. Some of the basic tools necessary to realize growth management goals and objectives include plans, development cost charges, zoning, and policies and strategies for the creation of regional town centres. To a large extent, these tools are sufficiently effective in their current form and have been tailored to reflect conditions in the region, but some adjustment and refinement may be necessary to ensure that they are able to effectively provide the support demanded by a comprehensive growth management program.

Specifically, there are several tools which are critical to successful growth management which are either not legislated or are not sufficiently developed to the point that they serve broad growth management goals and objectives. These are:

1. *Concurrency / Impact Fees.* Concurrency is the power to make new development pay for itself in terms of public facilities such as transportation, hospitals, water utilities, sewer systems, streets, schools, fire protection, and recreation facilities. While the *Municipal Act* permits municipalities to recover some of the costs of development through impact fees (i.e., development cost charges [DCCs]), it does not permit their collection for regional facilities which are vital to the region's well-being but difficult to finance. Furthermore, it is necessary that the pricing structure of impact fees accurately reflect growth management goals and objectives and at the same time be sufficiently flexible so that opportunities exist for individual communities to tailor them to meet local needs;
2. *Urban Growth Boundaries.* Urban growth boundaries are utilized to contain urban sprawl and leapfrog development by focusing growth within the boundary. In Greater Vancouver, the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) and the regional greenzone serve as the region's growth boundaries. They have been relatively effective, but ever increasing growth pressures continue to threaten their integrity. The greenzone needs to be officially entrenched and the commitment to stop the removal of land from the ALR needs to be strengthened;
3. *Funding.* The provincial government has considerable ability to influence the implementation and effectiveness of regional growth management with its funding of local governments. Shared provincial revenue includes 1% of income taxes, 1% of corporate taxes, and 6% of assorted fuel and sales taxes

and resource revenues (Bish 1990). Under the proposed growth management legislation, the Province would withhold these revenues as part of its enforcement powers for growth management. Additional shared revenue should be dedicated to fund planning grants and technical assistance for local governments.

These tools will be required by both the regional and local governments to carry out growth management. This does not, however, imply that each level will employ the same tools. Rather, local governments will exclusively use tools, such as development cost charges, while the regional government will have its own tools, such as urban growth boundaries. Tools used exclusively by the regional government will, however, be developed by both it and local governments.

### 11.3.3 *Organizational Principles*

How will growth management be adapted to the political, economic, social, and environmental realities of Greater Vancouver? The challenge lies in applying policy concepts and principles to actual problems and places. Creating workable strategies, principles, and procedures means linking knowledge (i.e., facts, growth pattern predictions, relationships among activities, interests and values of players) and action (i.e., effect of policy). This following discussion outlines the organizational principles upon which the growth management model will be predicated. It addresses the reallocation of functions and authority at provincial, regional and municipal levels of government required to effectively respond to growth issues.

Successful, goal-achieving growth management requires a balance between "top

down" control, ensuring consistent growth management practices at the regional level, and a "bottom-up" approach generating short-term and sustain long-term support from both the public and local governments by actively involving them in the decision-making activities. Sole reliance on either of the two approaches cannot guarantee results. Therefore, the proposed growth management model is based on a "hybrid model" approach which formally incorporates aspects of each approach. This model represents an organizational structure that balances municipal autonomy with effective regional coordination through comprehensive community-based planning and within the context of an overriding regional vision and supportive goals and objectives.

A growth management model that legitimizes a centralization of powers and a "top-down" approach would be subjected to considerable public outcry if it were advocated in the United States. In British Columbia, where there exists an established tradition of greater centralization of powers in the hands of government and a fourth tier of government, public opposition and questions of legality would be considerably less. But to presume that the public and/or local governments would accept limitations on their participation in growth management planning processes would be erroneous. Each of the groups must be granted the ability to formally participate in the formulation of critical aspects of growth management (such as the development of comprehensive plans and standards). Provisions for a "bottom-up" approach to growth management are thus required to offset criticisms resulting from "top-down" control.

Within the hybrid organizational approach, each of the three levels of government is charged with specific roles and responsibilities. Each level must fulfil these if growth management is to be effective. For example, the Province, which has the ultimate authority

to enact growth management legislation, has the primary responsibility of establishing and legislating growth management goals, objectives, and the essential features of the overall program. In addition, the provincial government has the important responsibility of ensuring that there is an effective and appropriate form of regional governance with the necessary powers and resources to properly address growth management issues.

Conversely, regional governments, working closely with local jurisdictions, will formulate the standards that promote the goals and objectives of growth management and related standards. Standards can be defined as targets or thresholds that "are specific descriptions of how [the public] wants their city to be today and in the future" (Pivo 1988, 2). They can be utilized to address a number of pressing urban and regional issues such as water supply, air quality, housing supplies, mobility, densities, and economic growth. Once they have been established, jurisdictions must "then develop a program for achieving and/or maintaining these qualities" (Ibid.). The essential condition associated with implementing standards is the direct involvement of governments and the public in their creation.

Alienation of either of these can severely limit the practicality and effectiveness of standards. The roles and responsibilities of the provincial, regional, and local governments are contained in the following tables:



**Table 11.1.**  
**Growth Management Responsibilities - Provincial Government**

|    |  |
|----|--|
| 1. | <p>Enact and support growth management legislation containing the following elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Goals and objectives of growth management legislation (see section 11.2.1);</li> <li>b) Guidelines and procedures for action;</li> <li>c) Levels of funding and criteria for imparting sanctions (i.e., "carrots" and "sticks" to promote compliance with legislation);</li> <li>d) Mandatory elements of regional and local comprehensive plans;</li> <li>e) A "growth management steering committee" to systematically review submissions from the regional governments for clarity, consistency and compliance with overall growth management goals;</li> <li>f) A process, or ladder, for dispute resolution; and</li> <li>g) A process for review and approval of submissions from regional governments.</li> </ul> |
| 2. | Restore the land-use planning powers to regional districts (re-establish broader system of regional planning than that eliminated in 1983 and amend the Municipal Act and Vancouver Charter to increase the mandate of regional government to address issues of regional significance.   |
| 3. | Review the GVRD's jurisdiction and redraw boundaries is necessary.   |
| 4. | Fund capital improvements necessary to support the growth management program.  |
| 5. | Oversee implementation of the growth management plan -- including procedural legislation to allow for monitoring and management of regional growth, responding to changing situations and requirements and effecting necessary changes.  |
| 6. | Officially commit to growth management in Greater Vancouver.   |
| 7. | Provide statistical support to municipalities and regional districts.  |
| 8. | Solicit input on growth management from a broad range of interested parties including local government planners and officials, academics, and private sector representatives.  |

| <b>Table 11.1. - Continued</b><br><b>Growth Management Responsibilities - Provincial Government</b> |  |
|---|--|
| 9.  | Promote and fund a broad-based and long-term public education process. |
| 10.   | Appoint and support a Growth Management Steering Committee.            |
| 11.   | Create a provincial land-use strategy.                                 |

| <b>Table 11.2.</b><br><b>Growth Management Responsibilities - Regional Government</b> |   |
|---|---|
| 1.  | Develop a growth management strategy in association with local municipalities.  |
| 2.  | Provide information and technical assistance.   |
| 3.  | Distribute financial resources allocated by the Province.   |
| 4.  | Act as liaison between municipalities to ensure coordination and consistency with growth management goals and objectives.   |
| 5.  | Develop a comprehensive, long-range regional land-use plan based upon goals articulated in <i>Creating Our Future</i> in order to address issues of regional significance such as a long-range regional land-use planning, transportation, jobs and business, social facilities, affordable housing, environmental protection, data collection and provision of basic services - these must be rooted in the economic, social, ecological, and physical realities of the region and the wider global trends affecting the region. |
| 6.  | Develop performance standards, in cooperation with local government that will achieve growth management goals and objectives.   |
| 7.  | Develop strategies to evaluate, monitor, amend, and sustain support for standards.  |
| 8.  | Develop and maintain linkages between land-use and transportation planning.   |
| 9.  | Promote horizontal and vertical coordination of planning activities.  |

| <b>Table 11.2. - Continued</b><br><b>Growth Management Responsibilities - Regional Government</b> |   |
|---|---|
| 10.   | Promote ongoing public participation including public education and direct community involvement -- endorsement of community-based participation in all aspect of implementing and administering growth management. |
| 11.   | Cooperate with local, provincial, and federal governments.  |
| 12.   | Provide support to local governments in creation or amendment of OCP's (planning grants, technical assistance, timetables, coordination, review, etc.).   |

To effectively perform these responsibilities the regional government will have to make special efforts to develop strong working relationships with its member municipalities. Equally, they would have to promote and nurture an environment conducive to public participation. This would require the continual dissemination of relevant information, regularly scheduled public forums, and provisions for furnishing meaningful feedback.

| <b>Table 11.3.</b><br><b>Growth Management Responsibilities - Local Government</b> |   |
|--|---|
| 1.   | Participate in the creation of and adopt regional mission statements, growth management standards, and long-range strategic plans.  |
| 2.   | Submit comprehensive land-use plans and/or create or amend Comprehensive Land-use Plans (i.e., OCPs) to conform with regional mission statements and plans - and in accordance with regional standards. |
| 3.   | Ensure public participation in the planning process at the local level.   |
| 4.   | Implement standards through appropriate municipal bylaws.   |
| 5.   | Coordinate with other local jurisdictions to achieve horizontal consistency.  |

The proposed organizational structure, based on a hybrid model, will experience operational difficulties if provisions are not made for introducing an independent third body, charged with monitoring and evaluating the activities and decisions of the regional and local governments. Creation of a "Growth Management Steering Committee" will serve this purpose. It will be responsible for systematic review of all comprehensive plans, mediation of conflicts between local and regional governments, and reduction of the need for direct intervention by the provincial government and its agencies. Systematic reviews will ensure that all plans and standards developed through the combined efforts of local and regional governments will be effective in achieving the stated growth management goals and objectives. This is a crucial role that should not be given to either the province or the regional government. If this responsibility is delegated to the regional governments they would potentially be placed in a position of conflict of interest. Assumption of this responsibility by the Province could potentially politicize growth management beyond what

would be otherwise expected. Membership of the committee should consist of elected municipal officials appointed by the provincial government.

As with other growth management models, this model will not go unchallenged. As related in Chapter 3, critics of growth management argue that it is a utopianist attempt to impose a compact, centralized, and densified urban form on a public that does not desire this type of living environment, nor has it been empirically proven that it is fiscally efficient or that it can maintain or enhance quality of life. Furthermore, growth management is regarded by some as elitist planning that benefits society's controlling minority at the expense of the politically and economically less-powerful. In this context, growth management becomes a vehicle to perpetuate the status quo by slowing or preventing growth (Morrill 1991).

Criticism is often directed at the impact of growth management policies on land markets and, by association, housing affordability. The use of standardized land-use planning tools, such as zoning, subdivision controls and impact fees, combined with growth management tools, especially urban growth boundaries or greenzones, result in excessive intervention in the land marketplace and abnormal operation. For example, urban growth boundaries, which limit the availability of developable land, artificially raise land prices within its boundaries while, on the outside, decrease it. The resulting higher land prices within the boundary are ultimately translated into higher housing costs and often an affordability crisis.

These criticisms have their merits but they should not, on their own, influence the decision to advocate growth management programs as a solution to complex growth problems. As with all public programs, success lies with carefully conceived and

implemented policies and strategies and, more importantly, broad-based and deeply-rooted political and public support. In the context of growth management, carefully conceived and implemented policies and strategies grow from a comprehensive and integrated approach which necessitates the coordination of actions pertaining to social planning, transportation, economic development, environmental protection, and land-use planning. Thus, criticisms directed at compact urban forms, a pivotal element of growth management, can be overcome through a comprehensive planning approach which looks beyond basic land-use considerations to address broader social, environmental, mobility, and economic needs. The proposed model is grounded in a comprehensive and integrated approach. Furthermore, the model represents the first of its kind to include in its goals, provisions for affordable housing. Although not foolproof, the comprehensive and integrated approach increases opportunities for, and the likelihood of, creating high quality living environments, and ultimately, a higher quality of life. Specifically, comprehensive growth management can achieve important benefits such as improved environment quality, reduced congestion on the region's roads and highways, improved decision-making, the equitable distribution of growth, and substantial savings to the taxpayer in terms of costly infrastructure.

These rewards are, in turn, dependent on strong and lasting political and public support for growth management. Public support is the key as politicians and political institutions will be compelled to follow suit if it is clear that the public is committed to correcting growth-related problems via a growth management strategy, and are equally prepared to accept the changes that it will necessitate. Nurturing public support is arguably the most difficult of all planning tasks and its achievement is neither straightforward nor guaranteed. Commitment to growth management will demand that the public have an

active and on-going voice in policy- and decision-making processes, access to information, and a forum in which to express opinions, ideas, praise, and objections. Long-term public support will further provide the necessary time for effective implementation. The benefits of growth management are many but they cannot be expected to materialize immediately. Patience to allow growth management planning to be successful is of paramount importance.

#### 11.4. Future Directions for Regional Growth Management

This section offers direction for the development of regional and local comprehensive plans which are required by the proposed growth management strategy. It does not attempt to define growth targets for individual municipalities nor does it develop these comprehensive plans; rather it outlines the planning principles on which future plans and strategies should necessarily be grounded. The roots of these principles lies with the GVRD's *Livable Region Strategic Plan*, a document which encompasses the fundamental planning principles which will guide the region's development. These principles are as follows:

1. *Linking Transportation and Land-Use Issues.* Growth and redevelopment in the region must be balanced with the development of the transportation facilities needed to support them. This requires regional coordination in the planning and delivery of transportation services in urban areas. Efforts must be made to recognize, support, and perpetuate the link between land-use decisions and transportation. The *Transport 2021* program is based on the explicit recognition of this link so that the GVRD and Ministry of Transportation and Highways are working cooperatively in an attempt to

coordinate land-use and transportation. This work will culminate in a regional transportation strategy. Local comprehensive plans developed under growth management legislation must recognize this regional strategy.

2. *Compact Urban Development.* The region's best opportunity for an efficient transportation system, protection of agricultural land, and an equitable distribution of jobs and housing means that future regional growth should be focused within existing urbanized areas and adjacent developing suburbs. The GVRD's Compact Metropolitan Area strategy developed through the *Livable Region* process, proposes to focus two-thirds of the regions population growth in Surrey and the North East Sector communities. The remaining growth would be concentrated in the Burrard Peninsula municipalities. The proposed growth management strategy will allow this development scenario to occur through the establishment of growth targets for each of the affected areas. An expanded GVRD power base provides it with the necessary authority to demand compliance if municipalities fail to voluntarily meet stated targets.
3. *Regional Town Centres.* Densification of major town centres surrounded by high density residential development and linked to other town centres by rapid transit is widely recognized in the planning community as an effective means to ensure a balance between jobs and population, and an effective, self-supporting transit system. The GVRD's Regional Town Centres strategy proposes to create a hierarchy of high-density town centres connected by transit. Accordingly, local comprehensive plans developed under growth



management legislation should recognize this work

4. *Protection of Agricultural Land and Natural Areas.* Protection of the region's important green space / farmland is essential to preserving livability. The GVRD's Green Zone strategy "will establish the solid Green Line which separates areas which are or will be developed from those which will be permanently reserved as wilderness, parks, wildlife habitat and farmland" (GVRD 1990a, 15).

The preceding planning principles represent the key elements which must be addressed in local comprehensive plans if the region's livability is to be maintained. These principles have been developed by the GVRD over the last 10-15 years. However, without a regional growth management framework in place to coordinate the multitude of plans, policies, and directives they will never be realized and transformed from policy into effective action.

#### 11.5. Summary

The GVRD currently relies on a partnership approach for implementation of *The Livable Region Strategic Plan*. In reality, this means that successful implementation of their plan is dependent on parties largely beyond their control. Recent disputes at the municipal level over growth targets developed by the GVRD are evidence that this approach is inadequate to preserve the region's livability.

Under the existing institutional framework, prospects for success of efforts to manage growth in a comprehensive and integrated manor are jeopardized by the following factors: ineffectual governance and organizational structures in the region; the lack of a

strong regional authority to oversee the implementation and administration of growth management; the lack of strong regional and provincial leadership; and, finally, the lack of broad-based public awareness and support for growth management. In order to implement the regional plan, priority should be given to improving the region's governance and organizational structure. Regional land-use powers should be restored to the GVRD. At a minimum, these must include the ability to adopt and implement a binding regional plan and to create policy on critical regional issues. The provincial government must demonstrate stronger leadership in the growth management arena by entrenching growth management goals and objectives and organizational principles in growth management legislation. Finally, the region's populace must be more intimately involved in the implementation of the regional plan.

The growth management model developed in this chapter represents a comprehensive, regionally-based structure designed to encourage regionally beneficial growth. In general, the model is a combination of "top-down" and "bottom-up" processes requiring all jurisdictions within the GVRD to create plans and policies which are supportive of mutually defined regional goals and objectives. Elements of the proposed regional growth management model include: growth management goals and objectives predicated on the livability issues stemming from the *Choosing Our Future* and *Steps to a More Livable Region* processes; a definition of tools to be utilized such as concurrency requirements and impact fees; and, an organizational structure which redefines the existing roles of the provincial, regional, and local governments which will participate in the growth management arena - the most notable of these being the enactment of growth management legislation by the province, the restoration of land-use powers to the region, and the

preparation of local comprehensive plans in accordance with regional policies.

The planning principles which should direct the development of the long-range regional land-use plan and various comprehensive plans which will be developed in association with this growth management strategy mirror those developed by the GVRD over the past decade. These include: linking transportation and land-use issues; encouraging compact urban development; creating high-density regional town centres; and, protecting important agricultural land and natural areas.

The future prospects of the proposed growth management strategy are good. Substantial benefits can accrue to the region if the strategy and model are implemented and given the support to continue into the future. Growth management is a complex planning endeavour that requires a long-term perspective and patience -- it must be given the opportunity to mature and evolve if it is to be successful.

## CHAPTER 12

### CONCLUSION - SECTION II

#### 12.1. Forging a Growth Management Strategy for Greater Vancouver

Following the argument put forward in Section I that a comprehensive and integrated regional growth management model is necessary to preserve livability in Greater Vancouver, this section set out to forge such a strategy. As a starting point, experiences with comprehensive land-use planning and growth management in the United States and Canada were reviewed. This was followed by an analysis of the existing structure of regional governance in Greater Vancouver and an inventory of growth management initiatives to date. Finally, this section outlined the foundations of a regional growth management strategy based on the principles emerging from previous chapters.

Chapter 8, GROWTH MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS IN THE UNITED STATES, revealed that growth management legislation has been introduced in 13 states during the past two decades. The goals, tools, and organizational principles associated with seven of the more notable U.S. models were reviewed. It was shown that the Washington State *Growth Management Act*, in particular, represents the most comprehensive growth management model yet developed and implemented. There are a variety of goals associated with this legislation which focus primarily on maintaining and enhancing quality of life. The Washington State experience offer a useful terms of reference with respect to the development of a growth management strategy for Greater Vancouver.

## LAND PLANNING AND GROWTH MANAGEMENT: THE CANADIAN

CONTEXT, Chapter 9, strived to determine if comprehensive growth management could be derived from the Canadian land-use planning tradition. To accomplish this task, the theory, practice, administrative structures, and implementation instruments associated with land-use planning in Canada were reviewed. Despite the fact that there has not been an attempt at legislated growth management to date there exists the necessary foundations to establish growth management. In terms of administrative structure, regional governments represent a vehicle to develop and guide comprehensive growth management programs. Similarly, a number of implementation instruments such as zoning, subdivision controls, and development cost charges, already exist in the Canadian land-use planning environment and are readily applicable in the growth management arena. Finally, there are a number of lessons to be learned from regional planning experiences in the Greater Toronto Area which should be considered at this crucial time in Greater Vancouver's history. For example, efforts to manage growth in the Greater Toronto Area have proven that a single authority, armed with adequate powers to coordinate planning activities throughout a geographically-broad and populace region, is needed if effective regional planning and growth management is to be a reality. Second, the Toronto experience has demonstrated that coordination and cooperation between all of a region's governmental authorities is required. These elements are notably absent in Greater Vancouver at the present time.

Chapter 10, TARGETING GROWTH: PRESERVING LIVABILITY IN GREATER VANCOUVER, revealed that much effort has been expended on preserving the region's livability by regional and local governments, the public, and a variety of special interest groups. In fact, most of the elements necessary for the formulation of an effective growth

management strategy, such as publicly identified livability goals and objectives and the beginnings of a regional land-use and transportation plan, are already in place. However, there is nothing to link these growth management initiatives together and, as a result, it can be argued that the region's livability will continue to deteriorate. In sum, without an official, binding, and comprehensive regional plan to provide the necessary direction for planning in the region's municipalities, it is debatable if effective and goal-achieving growth management will ever be realized. The restoration of regional land-use powers to the GVRD is an essential first step if this is to occur.

Chapter 11, entitled A GROWTH MANAGEMENT STRATEGY FOR GREATER VANCOUVER, suggests that several changes are required at an institutional level before any serious attempt at comprehensive regional growth management can be made. The model developed in this chapter is a combination of "top-down" and "bottom-up" processes with a regional focus. Simply, member jurisdictions are required to prepare comprehensive plans in accordance with a set of mutually defined regional policies. This chapter details a series of growth management goals, based on the GVRD's *Choosing Our Future* program and the subsequent *Steps to a More Livable Region*. The tools associated with the proposed model are concurrency requirements, urban growth boundaries (in the form of a green plan), and funding. In terms of organizational principles, the model details a hierarchy of roles for each level of government. The most significant of these include: the enactment of growth management legislation by the provincial government; development of a long-range regional land-use plan by regional and local governments; and, the preparation and submission of comprehensive land-use plans, which conform with regional mission statements, by local governments. This chapter contends that the planning principles which

should guide the regional vision and individual comprehensive plans, which are to be prepared in accordance with this growth management strategy, should include: linking transportation and land-use; promoting compact urban development; encouraging the further development of regional town centres; and, protecting important agricultural land and natural areas. Finally, a general discussion on how this model addresses the common criticisms of growth management was provided.

### **SECTION III**

### **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**



## CHAPTER 13

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 13.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the principle findings of the thesis. Provided is a general summary of the conclusions drawn in previous chapters (a more comprehensive discussion on the conclusions emerging from Sections I and II can be found in Chapters 6 and 12, respectively), a list of recommendations which are critical to the development and implementation of growth management in Greater Vancouver, and some suggestions for further research on the topic growth management in the region.

#### 13.2 Summary and Conclusions

In Section I, MAKING A CASE FOR GROWTH MANAGEMENT IN GREATER VANCOUVER, the potential applicability of comprehensive growth management to the Greater Vancouver region, and its appropriateness in addressing declining quality of life, was investigated. It was concluded that a legislated, comprehensive and integrated growth management strategy, which balances economic, social, environmental, and land-use considerations, represents a plausible, effective, and timely approach to addressing the complex growth issues affecting Greater Vancouver.

In Section II, entitled FORGING A GROWTH MANAGEMENT STRATEGY FOR GREATER VANCOUVER, a regional growth management strategy for Greater Vancouver

was developed. This approach is predicated on the experiences of various American and Canadian jurisdictions with growth management programs and initiatives. Although it was found that considerable energies have been directed towards managing Greater Vancouver's growth, it was argued that the ultimate success of these endeavours is questionable. The heart of the problem lies in the lack of a legislated growth management program to serve as a policy umbrella for all related initiatives and to provide overall direction and context. In addition, the lack of strong regional government, with sufficient mandated powers and responsibilities to effectively address growth issues or the creation of broad-based and enduring political and public support, places in question the success of developing and implementing an effective, goal-achieving growth management strategy.

The proposed growth management strategy addresses the shortcomings in Greater Vancouver's institutional environment, namely the enactment of growth management legislation, the restoration and expansion of regional land-use planning powers, and an enhanced and long-term public process designed to build consensus and generate feedback. The proposed comprehensive and integrated growth management model, based on the integration of "top-down" and "bottom-up" organizational structures, is designed to provide for both control and direction, and commitment and ownership. The model advocates a hierarchy of roles and responsibilities for each level of government. The success of the model is heavily dependent on the ability and willingness of each level of government to assume these roles. In this context, the Province is responsible for developing and legislating growth management goals, objectives, and operational procedures, regional government is responsible for developing a regional land-use plan, and local government is responsible for implementation of the plan through the preparation of comprehensive land-

use plans.

The implementation of a comprehensive, integrated and legislated growth management program as proposed in this thesis would represent a significant step towards improving Greater Vancouver's livability. Traffic and related mobility issues would improve, as would the general state of the natural environment. Beyond these benefits, growth management could achieve more attractive and livable urban and regional structures, improved and more consistent decision-making, the equitable distribution of inevitable growth, and greater government accountability to the region's populace. Implementation of comprehensive and integrated growth management could represent significant savings to the region's taxpayers. Improved decisions regarding land use and transportation planning, which are brought together in the growth management arena, will result in reduced expenditures on costly capital infrastructure such as bridges, roads and highways, service corridors etc.. Ultimately, comprehensive, integrated and legislated growth management would enhance those qualities that have made the region such an attractive and desirable place.

However, these benefits cannot realistically be expected to materialize all at once nor immediately. The task of managing complex growth pressures is as equally complex necessitating a long-term view and above all else, patience. Growth management planning must be given the opportunity to evolve and mature over time if it is to be successful.

### 13.3 Recommendations

There are a number of critical steps which must be taken before any significant attempt at comprehensive growth management in Greater Vancouver can be made. At a

broader level, this requires that all levels of government, politicians, bureaucrats, special interest groups and the public support the notion of legislated, regional growth management as an appropriate mechanism to address the region's declining livability. But, before such a program can be expected to be effective, several key inadequacies inherent to the region's institutional framework must first be addressed. In this regard, the provincial government must:

1. Enact growth management legislation which addresses the elements outlined in Section 11.2.; and
2. Restore and enhance regional planning powers to the Greater Vancouver Regional District. Specifically, the GVRD's mandate should be expanded to include planning for regional transportation, land use, economic development, and social planning (e.g., regional affordable housing strategy).

Effective growth management requires the commitment and participation of all levels of government. Accordingly, the development and implementation of an effective growth management strategy in Greater Vancouver requires that regional and local governments:

3. Adopt and implement the growth management model outlined in section 11.2..

Finally, it is essential to the success of this strategy that adequate resources be committed to ensure an effective public participation process.

#### 13.4 Areas for Further Research

In relative terms, the use of growth management as a tool to address growth issues

in Greater Vancouver and other region's is still in its infancy. Accordingly, there are a number of areas where further research is required in order to more fully develop and assess the applicability of growth management as a policy action. These include:

1. A review of the GVRD's public participation process as it relates to the formulation of land-use and growth management policy. This may be expanded to include an analysis of how to create and sustain public support for growth management policy in general;
2. A review of amendment to the GVRD's jurisdictional boundaries in order to reflect functional and political realities and to ensure successful growth management;
3. Further analysis regarding the operationalization of the growth management model proposed in chapter 11;
4. A review of the potential applicability of growth management principles to other rapidly growing regions of British Columbia, especially the proposed Georgia Basin, and other places in Canada; and
5. A review of the fiscal impacts and implications of comprehensive and integrated growth management (i.e., the extent of savings associated with more effective and efficient planning for regional infrastructure requirements).

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