URBAN GROWTH BOUNDARY POLICY IN COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE: LESSONS LEARNED AND FUTURE POLICY DIRECTIONS FOR THE LOWER MAINLAND

by

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Abstract

This thesis places the growth management, specifically the urban growth boundary, policies of the Greater Vancouver Regional District and the Province of British Columbia in comparative perspective. The operative problem statement for this study is that current efforts at managing urban growth in the Lower Mainland are ambitious, but that they need to be made more robust. The specific methodologies used to address this problem statement include: a detailed review of the literature on urban growth boundaries and on growth management; a review of growth management policies relevant to containing urban growth in the Lower Mainland; and a detailed examination of the urban growth boundary policies of two case studies (Thurston County, Washington and Metro Portland, Oregon).

The literature review reveals that urban growth boundaries are a simple concept, yet they are potentially troublesome policy considerations. As defined in the literature, urban growth boundaries are lines on a map that demarcate urban from rural land, thus setting a limit on urban expansion. The literature generally concludes that urban growth boundaries can be an extremely effective component to broader growth management programs, given a number of policy design considerations are taken into account.

A thorough examination of current growth management initiatives in the Lower Mainland reveals that the substantive content of both the *Livable Region Strategic Plan (1996)* and the *Growth Strategies Statutes Amendments Act, 1995* is “sustainable”, albeit somewhat incomplete. In placing these policies in comparative perspective with the urban growth boundary policies of the two case studies, it is generally concluded that urban growth boundaries would contribute to current efforts at managing urban growth in the Lower Mainland by containing sprawl and
ensuring the contiguity of urban development. Furthermore, it is argued that Provincial legislation should be amended in a way that outlines province-wide urban containment goals, ensures better interjurisdictional coordination of policies, and establishes enforcement mechanisms that include provisions for the application of sanctions upon noncompliant jurisdictions. Finally, while the case studies revealed some important information regarding urban containment in the Lower Mainland, they also served to confirm the information presented in the literature review, thus demonstrating consistency between theoretical notions of urban containment and practical experiences with urban growth boundaries.
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CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

1. Background

Limiting the adverse effects of urban growth has been the focus of academics and planners for hundreds of years. To date, the attention this issue has received has failed to produce any consensus regarding how urban growth should be managed. Nonetheless, the ills often associated with unchecked urban growth have been well documented in the past: starting with Queen Elizabeth I in 1580\(^1\), through Ebenezer Howard in Victorian England, and culminating in modern theorists such as Jane Jacobs, Peter Calthorpe, Kevin Lynch and Christopher Alexander, each lamenting the post-World War II patterns of sprawl characterizing much of the North American landscape. This thesis will examine different approaches to managing urban growth, including a discussion regarding the feasibility of applying urban containment policies, specifically through the use of Urban Growth Boundaries (herein referred to as UGBs), in the Lower Mainland.

At no point is it argued that the application of UGBs is the answer to urban sprawl. Instead, it is stressed that the use of UGBs is most effective in conjunction with supportive growth strategies and implementing regulations. The primary intent of this thesis is to place the growth management strategies of the Greater Vancouver Regional District (GVRD) and the Province of British Columbia in comparative perspective by examining UGB policies currently used in Thurston County, Washington and Metro Portland, Oregon that aim to both contain urban growth and preserve renewable resource lands. By placing the growth strategies of the GVRD and the province in comparative perspective, it should become apparent that the use of UGBs in

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\(^1\) As early as 1580, Queen Elisabeth I issued a royal proclamation which disallowed any development within 3 miles of the city gates. The purposes this greenbelt served included the preservation of nearby farmland and the provision of a physical buffer to guard royalty from the plague epidemic (Easley, 1992, 1).
2. **Problem Statement**

The specific problem statement for this thesis is as follows. *The GVRD is currently under enormous growth pressures. And while there have been efforts made by both the province and the GVRD in the past to deal with issues arising from these pressures (i.e., The Livable Region Strategic Plan (1996)\(^2\) and the Growth Strategies Statutes Amendments Act, 1995), it is becoming evident that current efforts at containing urban growth and halting unsustainable patterns of urban development must be made to be both more robust and more enforceable.* The rationale for writing this thesis is therefore based on the belief that urban containment strategies of the sorts examined in the two case studies would be useful components to current efforts at managing urban growth in the Lower Mainland.

It is contended that the current growth management considerations of the GVRD and the province contain the right components, such as the LRSP's focus on the creation of a metropolitan focus area. However, current policies lack a clear and coherent set of implementation measures, the absence of which might result in the failure of these policies in meeting growth management objectives. By placing these policies in comparative perspective, missing components become more salient, thus enabling conclusions to be drawn with respect to making present policies in the Lower Mainland more effective.

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\(^2\) Herein referred to as the LRSP.
3. Research Questions

The problem statement reveals that a number of issues need to be addressed with respect to improving current growth management initiatives in the Lower Mainland. These issues are represented by the following research questions that have guided the research of this thesis.

1. How effective are urban containment policies in general at both containing urban growth, and at preserving renewable resource and ecologically significant lands?

2. What can be learned in terms of making the growth management policies of the province and the GVRD more effective by putting them in comparative perspective?

3. By drawing on the experiences with UGB policies of both Metro Portland, Oregon, and Thurston County, Washington, can it be shown that the application of UGBs in the Lower Mainland would be an effective contribution to current efforts aimed at containing unsustainable growth patterns, preserving renewable resource and ecologically significant lands, and accommodating much of the growth the GVRD expects for this region? Furthermore, what can be learned about the importance of, and processes associated with, intergovernmental coordination of policies in terms of the future success of those policies? Finally, what can be said about the importance of state-sponsored planning frameworks with respect to the successful implementation of UGB policies?

4. What policy design considerations are crucial to the success of UGB policies specifically, and urban containment policies generally?

5. What conclusions can be drawn, after having examined the UGB policies of the two case studies, about the application of UGBs in the Lower Mainland? Are they an appropriate
policy response to current and projected growth pressures? Would they be complementary to current efforts, or would they replace them?

4. **Thesis Objectives**

Based on the above questions, the following thesis objectives were developed.

1. To study growth management policies in other regions in order to determine whether the application of UGBs in the Lower Mainland is an appropriate policy response to the growth pressures confronting the region, and if so, what is required to make them an effective growth management tool.

2. To explore in greater detail this sub-discipline of planning.

3. To contextuate urban containment policies in planning theory.

4. To discuss the interplay of public policies, especially those applying to land use, and their resultant economic effects on such matters as land values, housing prices/affordability, municipal servicing, transportation, and urban or regional form in the context of imposing UGBs.

5. To strongly establish the connections between broader, policy directives and more localized supportive regulatory frameworks in a growth management context.

6. To examine the role of the state in state-sponsored growth management programs in the United States in order to determine whether such programs would be a useful component to growth management initiatives in the Lower Mainland.
5. **Limitations**

There are some things that are either assumed or are omitted from this study. The most significant limitation of this study is its nearly exclusive focus on policy. One reason for this is a lack of resources necessary to gather data for more quantitatively oriented research. The other reason for this focus on policy is space constraints. Because it is the primary objective of this thesis to place the growth management policies of the province and the GVRD in comparative perspective, the author felt it necessary to analyze those policies in detail, rather than simply summarizing them. By considering them in detail, nuances in policy that often determine their success or failure become more salient.

Other limitations of this thesis stem from its assumptions. One such assumption is that growth can in fact be managed, directed or even predicted. There is a growing body of literature premised on the assertion that the linkages in the determinants of growth are so complex that it cannot be reliably predicted, and so traditional planning - that is, planning which proceeds from a series of growth projections and assumptions of growth - is destined for failure. This same literature, which is largely represented by Gleick (1987), Moon (1987), Pool (1989), Stewart (1989), and especially Cartwright (1991) and his connections of planning and chaos theory, purports to show that the full extent of the results of interventions in an essentially complex (i.e., non-linear) system can neither be predicted nor entirely known. In this way, Cartwright states, "...planning strategies that depend on perfect foresight are inappropriate and sometimes misleading" (Cartwright, 1991, 53). This thesis acknowledges this growing sentiment in the literature, but is nevertheless premised on the assumption that growth and the impacts of planning policy interventions can be known and predicted.
This thesis is also heavily reliant upon the assumption that sprawling patterns of
development are in fact “unsustainable”, that is, it is assumed that compact urban development is
a more sustainable pattern of development than is urban sprawl. There is a large body of evidence
to support this claim, most of which seem to reflect the basic premises and conclusions of the Real
Estate Research Corporation’s study entitled *The Costs of Sprawl*, which concluded that compact
development has lower fiscal, energy and environmental costs than sprawling patterns of
development. Moreover, the preponderance of that evidence seems to have generally “converted”
most professionals as well as academics to the belief that compact, more dense, forms of urban
development are sustainable (see Blumenfeld, 1957; Spreiregen, 1965, Nicholas, 1989; Calthorpe,
1992; Katz, 1992; and Lynch, 1988). Nevertheless, this author acknowledges the existence of
arguments stating otherwise (see Audirac et al., 1992; Harrison, 1976; Altschuler, 1977; Windsor,
1979; Knack, 1989; and Pickus and Gober, 1989), but remains unconvinced of their validity or
accuracy.

Closely connected to the above assumption is one which focuses on peoples’ propensity to
sprawl. That is, many people would prefer to commute greater distances, and further separate
themselves from urban amenities, in order to own large-lot single family detached homes. While
there are no studies that conclusively show causal relationships of the sort, there are volumes of
studies which clearly establish a link between suburbanization and residential preference (see
Schultz and Kasen, 1984; Michelson, 1977; Michelson, 1980; Lansing and Hendricks, 1967,
Fuguitt et al., 1989; and Audirac et al., 1992). For these reasons, the assumption that people
prefer to forego the benefits of living closer to the central city for home ownership in the suburbs
and exurbs is made.
6. **Thesis Methodology**

The methodology behind the preparation of this thesis is a simple one. It was determined that in order to answer many of the aforementioned research questions, a detailed examination of governmental policies accompanied by a comprehensive literature review would be the most appropriate strategy. Interviews were considered, but were largely judged to be unnecessary for the level of detail and focus of this study. Some select interviews were, however, conducted to clarify ambiguities in policies, to update information, and to fill gaps in knowledge. Otherwise, the information required for the preparation of this thesis was readily available in libraries, government offices, planning departments, government archives, and from private and nonprofit agencies.

The methodologies that have been used in the preparation of this thesis thus include: a literature review of the theoretical foundations of urban containment strategies, which primarily drew from journal articles and books; a detailed examination of the growth management strategies in the Lower Mainland, which consisted of a review of policies, government publications, discussion papers, and internet research; and finally, two case studies, each of which consisted of a review of policies, government publications, discussion papers, and internet research.

7. **Thesis Structure**

This thesis has six chapters. Chapter 1 provides background information pertinent to the thesis. It presents the problem statement and the research questions which have guided the preparation of this thesis. As well, it outlines a series of thesis objectives, it admits some limitations of this study, and it clarifies some of the terminology often used in this thesis.
Chapter 2 is a detailed literature review of UGBs. The primary intent of this chapter is to establish a theoretical planning framework for the application of UGBs as an instrument of growth management policy. Chapter 2 focuses heavily on the theoretical impacts of UGB policies. In this sense, the literature review explores how UGBs affect such things as: land values (urban, rural exurban); housing prices; housing form and mix; and the preservation of renewable resource lands. This chapter also discusses UGB policy design considerations such as: intergovernmental coordination of policy; determining how much land is required within the boundary; planning for efficient future boundary expansions; and enforcement mechanisms. Finally, Chapter 2 concludes with a limited theoretical evaluation of UGB policies, as set within the debate over their efficacy in the literature.

Chapter 3 provides a detailed look at the Lower Mainland’s current efforts at managing growth. The purpose of this chapter is to discuss both the GVRD’s and the province’s growth management policies so that they can be placed in comparative perspective. The primary focus of this chapter is a discussion of the GVRD’s LRSP, and specifically its Green Zone, Complete Communities, Compact Metropolitan Region elements. This examination serves to document two things. One is that the GVRD is currently considering some form of urban containment policy for the region. And two, the GVRD intends to manage growth by directing it to a single “growth concentration area”.

Chapter 3 also focuses on provincial efforts at managing growth in both the province and the Lower Mainland. In this context, the Growth Strategies Statutes Amendments Act, 1995 is examined in detail. Moreover, the role the Agricultural Land Reserve has played in managing urban growth, but more specifically preserving farmland and farming practices, is explored.
Overall, the chapter concludes that the above policies are good ones -- they say all the right things -- but they seem to lack a coherent set of implementation strategies, and are therefore difficult to enforce. In this respect, it is argued that UGBs would be an effective instrument of growth management policy, and would serve well as an implementation strategy for the above policies.

Chapter 4 is a case study of Thurston County, Washington's experiences with UGB policies. The primary purpose of this chapter is to examine the policies in detail in order to understand what comprises good UGB policy design. In this context, the larger issue of state-sponsored growth management programs is addressed. Furthermore, it is argued that the UGB policies of Thurston County are too recent to evaluate with any degree of confidence. Thus, instead of quantitatively analyzing the impacts of these policies, attention is directed at policy design considerations that may determine their success, and which include concurrency of growth management and municipal servicing policies, and a commitment among local jurisdictions to enact implementing ordinances supportive of the broader policy. Finally, some discussion about the transferability of these considerations to the Lower Mainland context is offered.

Chapter 5 is a case study of Metro Portland, Oregon's experiences with UGB policies. Because such policies have been in use for nearly three decades, some evaluation of their efficacy is provided. However, the main purpose of this chapter is again to discuss policy design through a detailed examination of three key policy documents produced by Metro - Region 2040, Regional Urban Growth Goals and Objectives, and The Urban Growth Management Functional Plan. Like the Thurston County example, this case study reveals a number of similar policy design elements that appear to be responsible for the policy's success. Also in this context, the strong state regulatory, policy, and legal framework within which local policy is made is
discussed. Overall, it is concluded that UGBs have been an effective component to Metro's efforts at managing that region's growth, despite some shortcomings associated with that policy. Moreover, it is asserted that similar policies to those of Metro would be a valuable contribution to the Lower Mainland's efforts at managing urban growth.

Chapter 6 provides a series of conclusions and lessons learned that attempt to tie the information presented in the thesis together. The degree to which the information presented in literature review is confirmed by the case studies is discussed. Furthermore, this chapter re-examines what has made the two case studies successful, and discusses how those elements might be considered in the context of the Lower Mainland's current growth management strategies. Finally, some avenues for future research are explored, and some closing remarks are offered.

8. **Definition of Terms**

   There are some terms used in this thesis that may require clarification.

   - **Growth** - This is typically referred to in this thesis as growth in population in all its forms (migration, immigration, and natural increase), with the usual impacts of: increased demand for housing, greater stress put on the transportation systems, and increased demand for municipal and regional services.

   - **Unsustainable Growth Patterns/Urban Development** - There is considerable disagreement over what "sustainable" or "unsustainable" actually means, especially in an urban context. Therefore, unsustainable growth patterns in this thesis shall simply mean urban sprawl, which is characterized by low density development at increased distances from city centres, and which is essentially dominated by the strict separation of land uses.
• **Leapfrog Development** - New development that is not contiguous with pre-existing development, resulting in large tracts of vacant and unutilized land between the new development and the pre-existing development. It is considered to be a land use pattern that is even less sustainable than sprawl because of the resultant greater commuting distances and the rising costs of servicing such development. As well, much leapfrog development occurs on some form of agricultural land that is taken out of production.

• **Urban** - This is usually defined in dictionaries as being or relating to a “city”. In this study, urban represents a certain level or density of development “and the nature of the services required for that development, specifically central water and sewer, and extensive road network, and other ‘municipal’-type services (e.g., public transit). Development not requiring such services would be ‘nonurban’ or ‘rural’” (Easley, 1992, 3).

• **Exurban Development** - Development beyond the city and suburbs, and which is generally characterized by a rural setting.

• **Hobby Farm** - Farms that are not “commercial” in nature. Essentially, they consist of a residential dwelling on a large tract of land (but which is smaller than commercial farms, e.g., 5-10 acres), and which conforms to rural designations only because the residents engage in limited farm activities, such as the planting of trees or orchards, or the raising of livestock.

• **Municipal Services** - Those which are generally provided by local governments. These may include, but not be limited to: water, sewer, roads, parks, and police.
CHAPTER 2 - LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Introduction

The purpose of this literature review is to establish a theoretical planning framework for the following chapters, as well as to present the work that has been completed on this subject to-date. As UGBs first appeared in North America in 1973, and so are a relatively new planning tool, the theoretical literature on the subject is relatively scant. For this reason, the literature presented in this chapter, while directly applicable to UGBs, at times can be either generalized under the rubric of growth management, or more specifically be in reference to other urban containment policies. Nevertheless, several common themes will emerge from the literature, all of which having significant impact on policy considerations for UGB design, implementation, and enforcement. Moreover, considerable attention in this chapter will be placed on how the literature treats UGB design and implementation, as well as on some of the intended and unanticipated effects UGBs have on such concerns as urban land values, rural and exurban land values, and on housing affordability. Finally, an evaluation of UGBs as an instrument for managing growth will be made based on arguments presented in the literature.

2. Urban Growth Boundaries - Urban Containment in North America

2.1. The Urban Growth Boundary Concept

UGBs are a form of urban containment policy, and are often viewed as an extreme reaction to the unsustainable urban growth patterns many large North American cities have been experiencing since the post-war period. While Oregon has proved to be the pioneering state with respect to implementing such policies (see Chapter 5), the number of states and local authorities
turning to some form of UGB policy to curb sprawl is growing, both in the United States and in Canada (See section 2.2.6.2).

2.2. **Urban Growth Boundaries Defined**

The theoretical underpinning behind UGBs is not a novel concept. Ebenezer Howard’s concept of the “Garden City”, and England’s experiments with greenbelt policies serve as the historical antecedents to contemporary UGB policies in North America. Greenbelts in England serve various purposes, all of which are similar to those associated with North American UGB policies. Specifically, in England, greenbelts are physical land barriers used to contain urban growth, avoid the coalescence of cities, preserve renewable resource lands, and preserve the historic setting of towns (DOE, 1993). Despite criticisms of greenbelts encouraging leapfrog development, they have been largely considered a success at containing urban growth (see Hall, 1992; Hall, 1988; Scargill & Scargill 1994; Munton, 1983; and Elson, 1986; DOE, 1993). Finally, because greenbelts serve similar functions, and thus require similar policy frameworks compared to UGBs, they are considered to be the historical and to a lesser degree theoretical antecedents to UGBs.

In a North American context, the literature seems to offer little variation in defining the UGB concept. Arthur Nelson, perhaps the foremost authority on UGBs, defines them simply as lines separating urban land from rural land. To Nelson, “the UGB is a line that delineates where urban development may take place in a metropolitan area; land within the UGB may be developed for urban use; land outside the UGB may not” (Knaap & Nelson, 1992, 40). V. Gail Easley, in an American Planning Association technical report, defines a UGB as “the line on the map that is used to mark the separation of urbanizable land from rural land and within which urban growth
should be contained for a period of time specified by a growth management program” (Easley, 1992, 3). These two definitions are representative of how most academics, practitioners, and government agencies define UGBs. Clearly it is not a complicated concept, but a more detailed literature review will demonstrate that designing and implementing effective UGBs is a complicated proposition.

Within a UGB, there typically exist two distinct areas, each defined by the purpose they serve in relation to the broader UGB policy. One such delineation is the urban growth area, which “generally refers to portions of the community designated for a combination of purposes - provision of services, compact urban form, siting of future development, and protection of resource lands and environmentally sensitive areas” (Easley, 1992, 4). Surrounding the urban growth area is the urban reserve area, an area of land within the UGB designated for long-term urban expansion. Outside the boundary is the rural reserve area, which is a land area protected by the boundary from urban encroachment.

**Figure 2-1 Schematic of an Urban Growth Boundary**

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3 Easley further breaks this land area down into urban service areas - areas in which the provision of water, sewer, roads, and police already exist - and urban expansion areas - land that is expected to have the same services as the urban service area in the immediate planning future.
Like Easley, Nelson also makes distinctions between various land areas often associated with UGB policy. “Urban” land, according to Nelson, is that which already contains urban development, and which will accommodate all immediate urban expansion needs. “Urbanizable land” is that land which could be developed at urban densities only after the supporting infrastructure is in place, and once expansion within urban land is deemed to be impossible. Until such time, however, “agricultural and low-density development is generally allowed [on urbanizable land], but only in a manner that does not preclude redevelopment at a later date” (Nelson, 1994, 27).

The exact labels these areas have are not as important as the fact that such delineations exist in the literature. It seems evident, then, that the literature is concordant in terms of how UGBs are defined, and in how land areas that comprise and surround the boundary are delineated.

2.3. Function of Urban Growth Boundaries - Their Purposes and Objectives

Simply stated; the fundamental objective of UGBs is to minimize, and perhaps eliminate, urban sprawl and its associated ills. Again, the literature seems to be in agreement over what purposes UGBs serve. Nelson argues that the specific objectives of UGB policy are: “the preservation of prime farm land, the efficient provision of public facilities, the reduction of air, water, and land pollution, and the creation of distinctly urban ambiance” (Nelson, 1994, 26). Furthermore, Nelson and Knaap assert that the primary function of UGBs is to “help manage growth... By restricting urban development to a well defined, contiguous area - the size of which

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4 One possible reason for this is that the use of UGBs as a growth management tool is a relatively recent development in North American Planning. It is conceivable that, in the future, and after more states gain experience with such policies, new uses for UGBs may emerge, and hence some divergent discourse in the literature results.
is based on the best available information about urban development trends - UGBs [are] expected to accommodate urban growth without permitting urban sprawl” (Knaap & Nelson, 1992, 40). Easley provides an almost identical listing of UGB objectives and functions. Among these are: “promoting compact urban development; providing efficient and cost-effective infrastructure; preserving resource lands, including farmland; and, protecting natural resources and environmentally sensitive lands” (Easley, 1992, 4).

2.4. Key Assumptions

In examining both the definition of UGBs and the functions and objectives they serve, two key assumptions inherent in such a policy emerge. The first is that urban sprawl is the problem, and that it carries the types of costs that are often associated with sprawl (increased air, water, and land pollution, increased traffic congestion, and increased municipal servicing costs). Conversely, there is a body of literature that provides a different viewpoint\(^5\), and which argues that urban sprawl is no more costly and detrimental to the environment than is compact urban development.

The other key assumption inherent in UGB policy is that growth projections are, or can be, accurate. Because the determination of the boundary’s size and placement is dependent on accurate growth projections, such a policy assumes a certain level of understanding among the individuals responsible for formulating this policy. While these assumptions are reasons for concern, they need not translate into theoretical weaknesses or practical difficulties. Sprawl is indeed costly and detrimental to the ecosystem and to those who manage it. And, while growth

\(^5\) Please see Chapter 1 for more information about this body of literature.
projections may not always be accurate, there are mechanisms for accommodating error with respect to these projections in the formulation of UGB policy.

2.5. Urban Growth Boundaries in the Larger Growth Management Context

As already mentioned, UGBs are a growth management tool. There is some confusion in the literature about what growth management is, and exactly how it differs from growth controls. Landis (1992), makes a useful distinction between the two seemingly similar concepts. Growth controls are used to significantly limit “population growth, housing construction, and/or economic growth below levels that would otherwise be achieved in an unconstrained real estate market” (Landis, 1992, 490). Examples of some widely utilized growth controls include: population growth caps; residential building permit caps; development moratoria; and, limiting commercial development (Glickfeld & Levine, 1991). In contrast to growth controls, growth management programs attempt to “redistribute growth and development in ways that minimize negative environmental, social, and fiscal impacts” (Landis, 1992, 490-1). The most common growth management tools include: conventional zoning (as well as modifications or extensions thereof); subdivision regulations and associated development cost charges; annexation controls; infrastructure service and timing requirements (referred to as “concurrency”); and finally, UGBs (Landis, 1992, 491). Also, most growth controls can be adopted either as individual policies, or as complements to a growth management program, but they need not be a part of a more comprehensive land use planning process. Growth management on the other hand, requires a pre-existing well developed land use planning process to which it is complementary (Landis, 1992, 492).
Because many writers often associate UGBs with somehow limiting growth, such policies are sometimes incorrectly labeled as growth controls. The intent behind UGBs is not to limit growth, but to redirect it in a more efficient, sustainable, manner, hence making their application part of a more comprehensive growth management program.

2.6. Key Issues in Urban Growth Boundary Policy Design

There are several key issues in UGB policy design that affect its utility. The literature stresses four primary design considerations, which include: determining the size of the boundary; intergovernmental frameworks for policy coordination; supportive local development control ordinances; and future boundary realignments and expansions.

2.6.1. How Big Do You Make The Boundary?

This issue in UGB design is the most difficult to resolve, as UGBs are planned in accordance with long-range (20-year) time horizons. There are a number of particular forces at work that affect the size and placement of the boundary. Perhaps the most problematic of these forces is the rate of urban development. Accurate information on urban development patterns, urban growth projections, as well as population and migration projections are all required in the determination of a UGB that has a twenty-year life-span.

The inclusion of too little land might well cause unnecessarily high rates of land price inflation; and, too much land included in the boundary might lead to the sorts of sprawl the policy is intended to prevent (Nelson, 1994, 26). Indeed where the line is drawn is of vital importance to property owners, to the development community, and to all jurisdictions of government. Jeffrey Leonard (1983) speaks to this issue by stating that “everyone has a vested interest in exactly
where the UGB is drawn... housing developers want the boundary to include substantial excess land; otherwise, they [would] claim, land prices would rise precipitously as urbanizable land became scarcer". \(^6\) Leonard also indicates that farmers would be divided on the subject. Those who might want to continue farming would likely lobby for all undeveloped farmland to be put outside the UGB, \(^7\) while those farmers who hoped to sell their farmland to developers at urban prices in the future would want their land placed within the UGB (Leonard, 1983, 93-4).

Prevalent in the literature is the notion of including a “market factor” when formulating the UGB as a means of reconciling the above concerns. A market factor is a “cushion - that is, the land needed to exactly serve the forecast population should be increased by a factor of 10 percent, 20 percent, or more to ensure freedom of choice of both location and housing type for residents” (Easley, 1992, 8). It is further suggested in the literature that if there is no market factor in the design of the UGB, or if the market factor is too small, then the possibility of developers looking to develop cheap land outside the boundary increases, hence resulting in leapfrog development. This latter point seems to contradict the very notion of the UGB. Market factors may make sense when used to offset inaccuracies in predicting future growth, but they should not be viewed as “carrots” enticing developers to build within the lines.

In calculating future needs within the boundary itself, prior to the addition of a market factor, Easley offers five “steps” which, he argues, provides the information needed to determine the size of the boundary (pre-market factor). These steps include:

1. Estimating demand for land for residential land needs;
2. Estimating demand for land for nonresidential uses;
3. Identifying resource and environmentally sensitive lands and removing them from land supply;

\(^6\) For more information regarding UGB’s effect on land prices, see section 2.7.1
\(^7\) They would want all farms, not just their own, because their loss might force the closure or relocation of nearby processing plants and markets on which they themselves depend.
4. Comparing demand with remaining land supply; and, 
5. Comparing levels of service and service areas with demand (Easley, 1992, 8).

The estimate of future residential land use needs, according to Easley and which is substantively consistent with the rest of the literature, can be accomplished by using the following calculation:

\[
\text{Forecast population} - \text{Current population} = \text{Additional population} \\
\text{Additional population} / \text{Number of persons per household} = \text{New households} \\
\text{New households} / \text{Density} = \text{Additional acres (needed for residential land use needs)} (\text{Easley, 1992, 9}).
\]

Similarly, with nonresidential future land use needs, Easley offers the following calculation which estimates commercial land demand\(^8\):

\[
\text{Forecast population} - \text{Current population} = \text{Additional population} \\
\text{Additional population} \times [\text{current number of commercial acres per 1,000 population} / 1000] = \text{Additional commercial acres} (\text{Easley, 1992, 9}).
\]

Together, the methods described above, in addition to "land use ratios",\(^9\) comprise the most common ways of predicting future residential and commercial land use needs, and so their consideration in determining the size and placement of the UGB is required in order for the overall program to be successful.

\subsection{2.6.2. Multijurisdictional Policy Coordination}

Where one draws the line also has impacts on various planning jurisdictions. As is often the case, UGBs transcend administrative and political boundaries. In order for the policy to be effective, those jurisdictions affected by the UGB policy must coordinate their growth policies, as well as their development control ordinances, so as to prevent any possible undermining of the

\(^8\) Demand for public land uses is generally predicted by using level-of-service requirements. For example, x acres of park space is required for y population.

UGB's integrity. This problem is resolved in the literature through surveys of different state sponsored growth management programs in the United States. As a result, a number of models have emerged pertaining to intergovernmental coordination of land use policies (Bollens, 1992; Leonard, 1983; Gale, 1992; Lassar, 1991; Knaap & Nelson, 1992; and Nelson, 1994).

The models constructed by Dennis E. Gale are representative of the body of literature on multijurisdictional coordination of land use policies, and so they are presented here in some detail. His basic argument is that state sponsored growth management programs, like UGBs, cannot be effective without non-local intervention, and the coordination of land use goals among all jurisdictions affected by the growth management program. Such things as annexation agreements/plans, zoning ordinances, subdivision bylaws, municipal and regional servicing plans, and municipal and regional investment strategies must all be consistent with a state's growth management goals (Easley, 1992, 10-15). The first of these models presented by Gale is perhaps the most widely utilized. His state-dominant model is characteristic of programs in Oregon, Florida, Maine, and Rhode Island. In this rigidly hierarchical model, local and/or regional plan preparation is mandatory, and states are mandated to impose strong sanctions\(^{10}\) on planning agencies which fail to submit a plan, submit a plan that is inconsistent with established state goals, or in other ways fails to comply with the state's growth management program objectives (Gale, 1992, 435). Of all the models presented here, and as the name implies, the state-dominant model seeks to achieve the highest degree of consistency through high levels of non-local intervention in substate and other local planning jurisdictions.

\(^{10}\) Such sanctions might include: halting the transfer of state grants or technical assistance on planning matters, or, in extreme cases, the cancellation of local authorities' abilities to collect impact fees and other taxes.
Gale's *regional-local cooperative* model is characteristic of state-sponsored growth management programs in Vermont and Georgia. In this model, states have a less "decisive" role in the growth management efforts of local and substate planning agencies. Plan preparation is voluntary for all local jurisdictions, and review of plans is carried out by state bodies, although their mandate is limited to reviewing and commenting upon submitted plans (rather than imposing sanctions on ones which are noncompliant). As a result, consistency requirements are moderate in comparison to the those within the *state-dominant* model. One of the most significant dangers associated with programs adopting this model is that regional and state plans fail to be goal or objective driven. Rather, they are at risk of becoming a mere representation of local plans.

In the regional-local cooperative model, thus, planning ascends cumulatively from lower levels to higher levels of government, with considerable discretion left to negotiation between local and regional bodies (Gale, 1992, 436).

It is evident that this model is considerably different from the *state-dominant* model to the extent that, in the latter, local planning is highly influenced by state prerogatives and hence set within a planning framework that is hierarchical as opposed to cooperative.

The *state-local negotiated* model is a hybrid of the preceding state-sponsored growth management models. Like the *state-dominant* model, the state plays a major role in the planning process to ensure that broad statewide and "multitier issues" are addressed (Gail, 1992, 436). The process is begun by the state outlining statewide growth management interests, followed by a "cross acceptance" process whereby state, county, and local governments negotiate and agree upon either the proposed statewide interests, or a negotiated version thereof. Therefore, plan preparation is at the state-level (but with the input of other jurisdictions), and is thus voluntary at county and municipal levels. In this regard, this model represents the *regional-cooperative* model.
in that it “seeks decisions through mutual adjustment of differences among levels of government” (Gail, 1992, 436). Gail makes it clear, however, that this process of cross-acceptancy may decrease consistency between plans from different jurisdictions. And finally, cross-acceptance, by definition, typically leads to less stringent sanctions imposed by the state for “insufficient cooperation from local governments” (Gail, 1992, 436-7).

The final model presented by Gail is what he labels the fusion model. Being the latest of such models to emerge, it is a hybrid of all the aforementioned models as its name implies. The only state that uses such a model is Washington (see Chapter 4). Like the state-dominant model, this arrangement mandates substate plan preparation. However, within the fusion model, such mandates are limited only to rapidly growing communities. Plan preparation in the “slow growth” communities is voluntary, and the primary responsibility for plan review is decentralized. In these respects, this model reflects aspects of the regional-cooperative model. Moreover, the fusion model resembles the state-local negotiated model to the extent that county governments, rather than regional authorities, are the primary participants in a quasi cross-acceptance process (Gail, 1992, 436). But unlike the state-local negotiated model, the fusion model restricts the state’s role to only reviewing and commenting upon local plans (instead of having the authority to approve or disapprove them).

The four models presented above are a good representation of the body of literature devoted to interjurisdictional coordination of growth management policies. As well, the four models have specific importance to UGB policy design. Nelson vehemently argues in favour of the need to consider policy coordination in every one of his books and articles on UGB policy. He states that “from the beginning the UGB concept featured an intergovernmental approach to
urban growth management. Today, with state participation in the delineation, implementation, and enforcement of all UGBs, intergovernmental participation remains a characteristic feature of the growth boundary system” (Knaap & Nelson, 1992, 40).

2.6.3. Supportive Local Policy and Regulatory Frameworks

In addition to Gale’s contribution to the literature, Nelson (1994) also illustrates the need for intergovernmental coordination of policy in the effective implementation of UGBs. Specifically however, he focuses on the need for a supportive local development control network which is consistent with larger growth management objectives. For all too often, local development controls, such as zoning and subdivision regulations, are blamed for thwarting statewide growth management initiatives, including UGBs. With regard to residential development occurring outside the lines, Nelson forewarns against allowing the development of small acre land parcels (1-10 subdividable acres) surrounding the growth boundary. Such residential development on urban fringe lands, Nelson argues, would lead to a “low-density residential ring around most or all of the UGB” (Nelson, 1994, 35). This sort of development makes future annexations and service extensions (concurring with future UGB expansion) difficult, resulting in rural areas previously held in reserve for future urbanization being developed “in ways that will be extremely difficult to urbanize” (Nelson, 1994, 36). It is crucial, therefore, that local authorities exert greater development control which is consistent with broader UGB policies in the urban fringe areas.

In light of these potential concerns, Nelson suggests that the following recommendations, made by ECO Northwest (1991), be adopted by all municipal authorities affected by UGB policy:

1. Require that urban areas establish long-term UGB expansion areas based on fifty-year public facilities needs...Strict timelines and unambiguous standards for UGB expansion into the reserves is critical.
2. Prohibit the placement of dwellings on land planned and zoned for exclusive farm or forest use within the reserve.\footnote{11}
3. Establish a large (at least 10-acre, preferably 20-acre) minimum lot size for rural residential areas within the reserve.
4. Allow for in-fill and more efficient land use in areas that are already developed at quasi-urban residential densities (one to two units per acre) and which are precluded from full urbanization in the future. Recognize that these areas are unlikely to have urban services or be annexed to a city, and give counties the authority to plan for and provide an appropriate level of services to these areas.
5. Encourage cities to include within UGBs quasi-urban areas at the urban fringe. Such a policy would encourage cities and counties to work together to provide urban services to support infill and redevelopment (Nelson, 1994, 36; ECO Northwest, 1991).

It is clear that these recommendations, made by ECO Northwest, are meant to ensure that local government land use regulations do not subvert broader UGB policy objectives regarding development within the rural reserve area, or on the urban/rural fringe. While Nelson sees development occurring outside the growth boundary as affecting its ability to meet urban containment objectives, he is adamant that policies within the boundary are equally important. In this regard, Nelson condensed previous work (ECO Northwest 1991; Knaap and Nelson, 1992; and Nelson, 1986, 1992) on this problem, and presented his findings in the form of recommendations (again aimed primarily at local governments). These recommendations include:

1. Prohibit land divisions in urbanizable areas until urban services are available or establish a large minimum lot size (10-20 acres) for areas that do not have urban services. Such measures will increase the incentive to pay for the extension of urban services necessary to support more intensive land use.
2. Establish minimum as well as maximum densities through zoning ordinances that specify a density range that must be achieved, rather than establishing only a density ceiling. Do not allow single-family development in multifamily zones unless a minimum density is achieved.
3. Require that any development or land division that is approved in the absence of urban services be conditioned upon an approved concept plan that considers the future location of urban facilities.
4. Prohibit serial partitioning. Require all land divisions to occur through the subdivision process [which would now be consistent with state growth management goals] and ensure that urban services are provided.
5. Require jurisdictions that allow any interim development or land divisions in urbanizable areas to have detailed public facilities plans that specify the location, source of financing, and schedule of construction for future streets, sewer, water, and storm drainage facilities.

\footnote{11}{For explanations on terminology, such as “urban reserve”, please refer to section 2.2 of this chapter.}
6. Require that local zoning ordinances not allow single-family houses in urbanizable areas where land is zoned for commercial, industrial, or multiple-family use (Nelson, 1994, 39; ECO Northwest, 1991).

As is evident, many of the recommendations made by Nelson in respect of development in and around UGBs are consistent with much of the literature on effective governance structures in growth management schemes, and especially with Gail’s four models on intergovernmental coordination of policy. What Nelson offers that the other literature does not are specific recommendations designed to make state-sponsored growth management programs, especially UGBs, more effective and robust by ensuring local government’s adherence to broader policy objectives.

2.6.4. Growth Lines and Boundary Realignments

Unanticipated growth, an unnecessarily tight UGB, and failure to include a market factor into the design and placement of a UGB will eventually place pressure on state authorities to prematurely expand the growth boundary. UGBs must be perceived as permanent to be effective. That is not to say that boundaries are inviolable in every single case, but rather the growth boundaries’ geographic integrity must be, as well as perceived to be, supported and upheld by all planning jurisdictions, without exception.

Expanding the boundary can be a laborious and at times confrontational process, especially if it must occur before the expiration of the boundary’s planning horizon (typically 20-25 years). Lassar and Porter suggest that, to avoid such a process, UGB expansion should be a phased proposition, and set out during the formulation of the growth boundary policy (Lassar & Porter, 1990, 33-4). They argue that the problems associated with realigning UGBs may be minimized if a “phasing sequence that is firm enough to provide predictability for long range
planning, yet sufficiently flexible to respond to changed conditions” is incorporated into the planning of the UGB at its inception (Lassar & Porter, 1990, 34). Unfortunately, this is not so easily realized in practice. For, as discussed earlier, one would require virtually perfect knowledge of future development patterns, population growth, migration patterns, and demographic projections in order to make phasing a viable policy option.\textsuperscript{12}

Easley also emphasizes the importance of considering boundary expansion early in the policy formulation process. In his analysis, he summarizes an Oregon \textit{Urban Growth Management Study}, which outlines four proposals concerning UGB expansion. What is evident in his examination is that expanding or realigning the growth boundary is inextricably linked to the preceding UGB design considerations which dealt with interjurisdictional coordination of growth policies and land use regulations. Easley states:

1. To enable urban growth boundary expansion, identify expansion areas and designate them “urban reserves.” Within urban reserves, prohibit non-farm and non-forest dwellings on lands planned and zoned for exclusive farm use and establish a floor minimum lot size of 20 acres or larger for sparsely developed portions of urban fringe exception areas.\textsuperscript{13}
2. Amend the statewide planning goals to more clearly define policy on exurban development within commuting distance of urban growth boundaries. The amendments should consider the effects of exurban development on the accomplishment of statewide planning program and local plan objectives inside urban growth boundaries, and the values to be protected and balanced in planning for exurban areas. These should include economy in the provision of services, public safety, protection of commercial farm and forest land uses, natural resource conservation, and the scenic and open space qualities of countryside outside cities.
3. Establish a planning framework for exurban exception areas. The framework should include standards for appropriate uses, densities, and public services in exurban exception areas. It also should encourage or require the clustering of development. Where they do not now exist, the framework should provide for the development of plans for exurban exception areas.
4. Expand the scope of city/county growth management agreements to include the entire area within commuting distance of a urban growth boundary. The agreements should provide for “cross-acceptance” [as discussed earlier] (Easley, 1992, 10-12).

\textsuperscript{12} Although this is essentially what is done in Metro Portland. See Chapter 5.
\textsuperscript{13} This report defines exception areas as lands outside the growth boundary which are deemed suitable for residential development only because they are unsuitable for farm or forestry use.
Indeed, this quotation illustrates that one of the most important reasons for coordinating growth management polices, as well as local land use regulations, is to secure the possibility of future UGB expansion. Furthermore, the difficulties in including exurban and other exception areas into the expanded growth boundary (due to the presence of noncompatible uses) is made apparent, hence Easley’s heavy emphasis on being proactive in addressing development in these areas early in the process. In so doing, future boundary expansion is thus made both more possible and efficient due to the assurance of compatible land uses along the pre-expansion boundary periphery.

A paradox therefore seems to emerge with respect to considering future UGB expansions early in the formulation of the policy. On the one hand, future boundary expansion must not be ignored in the policy’s creation; yet, on the other hand, the boundary must also be depicted in the policy as permanent in order to quell potential currents of land speculation. Effectively resolving this apparent paradox is a challenge that must be met in the formulation of UGB policy.

2.7. **Intended and Unanticipated Effects and Impacts of Urban Growth Boundaries**

2.7.1. **Impacts on Land Values**

The literature on the effects UGBs have on land markets is represented by three primary models. The first characterizes UGBs as *supply constraints* on urban land. In a study done for the Urban Land Institute, Whitelaw (1980) argues that effectively implemented UGBs, acting akin to regular zoning ordinances, would necessarily raise the value of “unimproved” urban land by reducing its supply “below the market-prescribed level” (Knaap & Nelson, 1992, 43; Knaap, 1985; Brueckner & Lai, 1996). Thus, land values within the growth boundary would be higher
than those outside the boundary. As Whitelaw argues, however, this is only possible “when those who would have bid for urban land outside UGBs are constrained to bid for land inside UGBs” (Knaap & Nelson, 1992, 43).

Despite rising urban land prices, the intention of the policy -- to encourage more efficient and sustainable development patterns within and outside the boundary -- is nevertheless realized according to this model. This is so because one of the primary results of UGBs, as indicated in this supply constraint model, is that development is turned inward, resulting in higher densities within the boundary. This occurs because “developers economize on the relatively more costly input, land, and substitute for land the relatively less costly input, capital” (Knaap & Nelson, 1992, 44). The overall result is that development within the boundary becomes more capital intensive and less land intensive, and is characterized by more compact and dense development. Whitelaw’s arguments have been supported by more recent, albeit more generalized, studies examining growth management’s effects on urban land values (Brueckner & Lai, 1996; Knaap, 1987, 1985; Nelson, 1994, 1992, 1988, 1985). According to this model, therefore, UGBs can only achieve their objectives through the alteration of land prices in urban land markets.

The second model dealing with the effects UGBs have on land values is an extension of the supply constraint model forwarded by Whitelaw. Knaap (1985) puts forth a model that purports to show that UGBs are not primarily responsible for changing land values. Instead he illustrates that the supply of urban land is constrained not by UGBs, but by underlying local regulatory frameworks such as zoning (Knaap, 1985, 28). Therefore, “UGBs affect land value only by influencing the expected date of zoning changes” (Knaap & Nelson, 1992, 44).
According to Knaap, then, urban land values are not directly affected by UGBs. Instead, they are
dictated by local zoning ordinances.\textsuperscript{14}

The areas that seem to be most affected by UGBs, according to this model, are rural land
zones. Constant with the rest of this model, rural land values are highly influenced by an
expectation of future changes in zoning, resulting in rural land values increasing to that of urban
land markets. Knaap concludes, therefore, that “rural land values will be higher inside UGBs due
only to expectations [emphasis added] of sooner conversion to urban land. Thus, UGBs affect
land value only in rural zones via expectations concerning the timing of zoning changes” (Knaap
& Nelson, 1992, 46). It comes as no surprise, then, that Knaap’s model has been named the

\textit{UGBs as Timing Constraints} model in the literature on the relationships between land values and
UGBs.

The final model presented in the literature is one that extends each of the previously
mentioned models, and which examines “spillover” effects between rural and urban land uses.
Nelson (1988, 1992b) defines the exclusive farm use zones surrounding a UGB as a privately held
greenbelt.\textsuperscript{15} He suggests that urban residents living in close proximity to the UGB will enjoy
higher amenity values due to rural scenery, higher quality open space, environmental quality and
so on. At the same time, however, farm residents living close to the UGB will experience
economic losses in that their land values decrease due to nearby nuisances such as the higher
levels of pollution and congestion typically associated with (sub)urban areas (Knaap & Nelson,
1992, 46). Nelson (1988) also illustrates that exurban development and commercial farming may
peacefully coexist, with each having little effect on the other’s land value. Hence, Nelson argues

\textsuperscript{14} What Knaap fails to account for is the fact that zoning in local jurisdictions affected by UGB policy is (or should
be) dictated by the UGB policy. Therefore, urban land values are affected by the presence of UGBs.

\textsuperscript{15} Privately held in the sense that many individual landowners comprise the land surrounding the UGB.
that these “location-specific characteristics would be capitalized into land values. Holding other things constant, urban land values will be higher near rural land, and rural land values will be lower near urban land” (Knaap & Nelson, 1992, 46; Nelson, 1994, 32-33; Nelson, 1992b). Therefore, Nelson’s model, entitled UGB’s as Location Constraints in the literature, accounts for changes in land values by attributing these changes to the simple existence of a boundary separating non-conforming uses.

In sum, these three models indicate that land values are affected by UGBs in three ways. One is that UGBs limit the supply of land, thus increasing urban land values, which ultimately results in higher urban densities (assuming the absence of restrictive zoning). The second way UGBs affect land values is by their alteration of expectations regarding future land use. This also has an effect on current land use and other development decisions. Finally, UGBs affect land values simply by demarcating conforming from non-conforming uses, thus influencing where future urban development occurs (Knaap & Nelson, 1992, 47).

As a final note with respect to effects on land values, it is important to emphasize that UGBs necessarily affect social and fiscal equity. By implementing a UGB, “wealth is transferred from people who own land outside the boundary to those who own land inside it. Wealth is also transferred from those who own urban land at a distance from the UGB to those who own land near it; and, from those who own agricultural land near the boundary to those who own agricultural land further from it” (Knaap & Nelson, 1992, 63-64). Knaap and Nelson (1992) argue, however, that judgment regarding such redistributions in wealth is inappropriate due to confounding variables. One cannot conclude that such wealth redistributions are caused by the imposition of UGBs, as no causal relationships have yet to be established in the literature.
2.7.2. Impacts on Housing Prices

It has been repeatedly shown in the literature that controls on land use affect the housing market through the market for land (Knaap & Nelson, 1992; Beaton & Pollock, 1992; Katz & Rosen, 1987; Toulin, 1994). But do they on balance affect housing prices? As illustrated above, UGBs affect both the supply and value of land, urbanizable and other. For this reason, UGBs have an affect on housing prices. Katz and Rosen (1987) show that “formal growth management plans appear to have an important interjurisdictional price effect associated with growth controls” (Katz & Rosen, 1987, 159). Specifically, their study, employing regression analysis and hedonic pricing models, shows that land use regulations, such as growth boundaries, raise housing prices by approximately 17 to 38 percent, compared to neighboring communities without such controls.

Two other variables affect housing prices through influencing the amount of developable land. One is local zoning ordinances. The other is the “provision of requisite urban services”, the supply of which is directly proportionate to the supply of developed land (Knaap & Nelson, 1992, 71-72). Demand side effects are also worthy of note. For example, to the extent that UGBs improve the local environment (positive amenity values for urban residents close to the boundary), increases in housing prices reflect a concomitant rise in land values (Knaap & Nelson, 1992, 73). Knaap and Nelson summarize the ways in which UGBs affect housing prices in the following statement.

...land use controls have the potential to influence the housing market in several ways: by restricting the supply of housing inputs, by decreasing the supply of housing, and by increasing housing price. Theoretically, at least, land use controls can also do just the opposite. On the demand side, land use controls can increase the attractiveness of a community, thereby increasing housing demand and increasing housing price. Finally, land use controls can influence housing density by changing the price of land relative to other inputs and by imposing minimum lot (or maximum density) requirements (Knaap, 1992, 75).
Finally, UGBs can also affect housing prices through their affect on housing form, density and mix. As mentioned in the preceding section, increases in urban land values resulting from the imposition of a UGB translates into higher urban densities. Knaap and Nelson argue that these increases in density result in higher numbers (absolute and percentage of total) of multifamily housing units in these areas. It logically follows, then, that the price of such multifamily housing would decrease. UGBs therefore affect housing, mix and form, which in turn affects the prices of various housing forms differently. Generally, the price of single family detached housing on large lots would increase with the imposition of UGBs; whereas, the price of more dense forms of housing is likely to decrease with the imposition of UGBs (other factors constant).

Overall, the literature is explicit with respect to the effects UGBs have on housing form and mix, and thus affordability. Clearly, the supply of developable land is affected by the presence of growth boundaries. This raises the value of such land, hence affecting housing form (increased densities), which consequently affects housing prices (both positively and negatively). Therefore, to the extent that developable land is constrained, housing prices are expected to rise (especially for large-lot single family detached homes); and, to the extent that urban areas densify, housing prices are expected to either stabilize or fall. The extent to which the benefits associated with density offset the adverse affects of land constraints has yet to be adequately researched, and so any conclusions regarding the possibilities of this proposition would be inappropriate at this time.

2.8. Evaluation of Urban Growth Boundaries in the Literature

At the beginning of this chapter, it was stated that UGBs are a relatively new phenomenon in North America, officially used for the first time in 1973. Few quantitative studies have been completed that show definitive proof regarding UGB’s effectiveness at meeting their stated
objectives. Nevertheless, there remain staunch supporters (Knaap, Nelson, Easley, and Chinitz) and fierce critics (Porter, Lassar, Downs, and Fischel) of the concept. The following case studies (Chapters 4 and 5) attempt to illustrate that UGBs can be useful growth management tools, given the right circumstances. Therefore, rather than providing detailed examples of where and how UGBs have succeeded or failed, their evaluation in the remainder of this chapter will be limited to that which can be generalized from the literature.

UGBs serve two primary functions. One is to preserve renewable resource lands and open spaces. The other is to contain urban sprawl behind well defined, non-arbitrarily determined boundaries, thus mitigating the adverse effects typically associated with sprawl. The question, then is: does the literature pertaining to UGBs suggest that their two primary functions have or are being satisfied? In considering an answer to this question, it is important to remember that UGBs are not growth controls. That is, they are not necessarily intended to slow either the growth rate, or growth in absolute terms. Rather, UGBs are supposed to redirect growth in a manner that satisfies its two primary objectives.

Speaking to the effectiveness of UGBs, an ECO Northwest study concludes that “urban growth can be largely contained in urban growth boundaries”, provided that there is a strong system of supportive implementing regulations (Knaap & Nelson, 1992, 60). Furthermore, Nelson (1992a) argues that UGBs are effective at both preserving farm land and containing urban sprawl. Nelson, drawing on the experiences of Oregon, presents several “successes” UGBs have enjoyed. Some of these successes are summarized as follows:

- *Development has been focused inside the UGBs* -- in excess of 90 percent of new residential development occurred within growth boundaries;
• The effect on housing prices has generally been favorable (i.e., non-averse) -- housing prices have not risen sharply in comparison to the rest of the country, possibly because of: slow growth rates, considerable land supplies in urbanizable areas within the lines, and savings to developers due to the streamlining of the development process resulting from the adoption of UGBs;

• Housing patterns have become more dense -- the average density has doubled in urbanized areas since the late 1970s, representing a rate of urbanization much higher than that of the national average;

• The program preserved large blocks of rural land for resource use -- speculation of urban fringe farmland has been reduced considerably;

• Reduced discretion has lead to greater certainty -- little discretion, and extremely unambiguous development regulations provides predictability and certainty among the development community, which translates into large cost savings for the developer, hence leading to greater affordable housing opportunities; and,

• The permit "fast tracking" program is effective -- uncertainty in planning decisions regarding development is removed due to intergovernmental coordination of policy and regulatory frameworks (Nelson, 1992a, 13; Nelson, 1992b).16

While Nelson is supportive of the claim that UGBs are effective at containing urban growth and preserving farmland, he is not neglectful of the concept's inherent shortcomings. Nelson (1992a) indicates that there are some potential consequences of imposing UGBs. The first consequence is that UGBs run the risk of becoming inflexible instruments of policy; in essence,

16 See also Chapter 5. The last two points made are aspects of the UGB policy that could have worked in isolation, but were listed as UGB successes because of their interconnectedness to the broader policy.
becoming a policy end as opposed to a policy means. The second is that it might actually be easier to develop land outside the UGB than originally thought. So called "exception lands" may have fewer development restrictions than adjacent land within the UGB, hence attracting development that might otherwise be disallowed within the lines.

The third consequence is related to the densification of the urban areas through infill and redevelopment. Such redevelopment will be resisted by residents living in well established low density urban neighborhoods, and who have the resources to oppose these developments. The result is that much of the redevelopment will likely occur in "lower valued residential areas", hence contributing to gentrification forces in areas consisting of high numbers of "affordable housing". The fourth consequence of implementing UGBs is that, without necessary supportive local regulations in place, underdensification may result. By designating large tracts of land for "future urban expansion", there is little incentive to redevelop inner urban areas, especially when local regulations allow for developments well below the maximum density allowed for a given area. The final potential consequence of UGBs, as identified by Nelson (1992a), is associated with affordable housing. While housing prices have remained below the national average (in Oregon), concern about a housing market within UGBs being able to continue producing affordable housing for the more economically disadvantaged groups is increasing. This is so because of the effects UGBs have on housing mix. In other words, increased residential densities may lead to lower housing prices for certain housing forms, but it does not necessarily mean that affordable housing -- as defined by the Department of Housing and Urban Development as that

17 Sparsely located low density developments outside UGBs which predated their imposition, and which are located on farmland of mere marginal quality
18 It should be strongly noted that, although Nelson presents these reservations about UGBs, he remains a supporter of their ability to conserve farmland and contain sprawl.
which does not absorb more than 25% of one's income -- remains a possibility without inclusionary housing programs.

Other criticisms of UGBs are present in the literature. Notable critics of UGBs include such authors as: Anthony Downs (1992), Terry Lassar and Douglas Porter (1990), and William Fischel (1991). Most of their criticisms echo Nelson's concerns over the possible consequences associated with UGBs. Downs argues that UGBs and other forms of growth management necessarily lead to higher housing costs, and thus increase socio-economic housing disparities. Fischel argues that UGBs essentially contribute to sprawl by encouraging leapfrog development (Fischel, 1991, 341-4). This argument is supported by Lassar and Porter, who further assert that "experience with urban limit lines demonstrates that they remain controversial, vulnerable to political whims as well as legal standards"; and that UGBs, a supposedly flexible instrument of policy, could instead "harden into a new Berlin Wall" (Lassar & Porter, 1990, 32). Moreover, UGBs invariably create a system of "winners and losers", especially in cases where the boundary is expanded or realigned (Lassar & Porter, 1990, 34). Lassar and Porter's criticisms are summarized in the following quotation:

Urban limit lines have their limitations. Like other growth management tools, they may have consequences - mainly higher land and housing costs - that can outweigh the benefits they bring. In the long run, they may not restrain development in rural areas effectively and may introduce troublesome patterns of urban development. They tend to become political pawns, symbols of broader community conflicts. Thus, in the quest for effective growth management, their enactment may exacerbate rather than solve problems (Lassar & Porter, 1990, 35).

Despite its detractors, UGBs are supported by such scholars and practitioners as Nelson, Chinitz, Knaap, and Leonard. As well, the UGB concept has been introduced by many states and local authorities (such as: Florida, Rhode Island, New Jersey, Oregon, San Diego, Washington State, Minnesota, and Hawaii). Finally, in evaluating the effectiveness of UGBs, two caveats
must be remembered. One is that there is little, let alone conclusive, empirical evidence on the effectiveness of UGBs. As Nelson states: “Ironically, little can be said conclusively about the successes or failures of the program [Oregon’s UGB policies].... Despite considerable anecdotal evidence and occasional empirical studies that seem to suggest overall success, there is surprisingly little information gathered to measure that success” (Nelson, 1992a, 16). This is so because the arrival of UGBs on the North American planning scene is relatively recent (1973).

The other caveat is that it is difficult to measure the successes or failures of a tool that is superimposed upon a host of local, substate, and other planning agencies, whose individual or collective land use policies could easily be confounding variables in the analysis. Finally, it is crucial to bear in mind, as is argued throughout this thesis, that UGBs cannot be effective if implemented either alone, or without the existence of necessary intergovernmental policy coordination and supportive local land use regulatory frameworks. In other words, UGBs must be employed in concert with other growth management measures, and perhaps with policies designed to offset some of the negative externalities associated with UGBs. It is under these conditions that the literature is generally supportive of the assertion that UGBs can be effective instruments of policy.19

3. Summary and Conclusions

This chapter reviewed the literature on UGB policy in North America. Perhaps one of the most important conclusions that can be drawn from the literature is that, in order for one to fully understand the UGB concept, one must contextuate it within the larger growth management debate. Determined to be an outgrowth of the Garden City Movement and English Greenbelt

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19 Most of the critics seem to miss the point in this regard, as many of their criticisms seem to imply the use of UGBs in isolation of other land use and related policies.
policy, the North American UGB concept was defined as non-arbitrarily determined lines that demarcate areas in which development is desired from those in which development should be discouraged. And it was concluded that their primary purposes include the preservation of farm and other resource land areas, and the containment of urban sprawl.

In addressing key issues pertaining to the design and implementation of UGBs, their use was contextuated within the larger growth management debate, and also within the spectrum of policy tools commonly utilized to implement growth management programs. In this sense, the literature clearly emphasizes the importance of multijurisdictional coordination of land use policies and other regulatory development control frameworks. Four predominant models of intergovernmental coordination of policy were examined, each illustrating different approaches states have taken to ensure growth management policy coordination. The literature concludes that failure to do so can result in local land use regulations undermining regional or state land use or growth management objectives. Two other major themes presented in the literature relating to the design of UGB policy were discussed, including: determining how big to draw the line; and ensuring that current boundary design considerations allow for possible future boundary expansion or realignment.

The literature also emphasized that UGB policy can have a broad range of implications, perhaps the most significant of which is the effect UGBs have on the value of rural, urban, and exurban land. Several models were presented, each illustrating how UGBs influence land values. They emphasize that changes in land values resulting from the imposition of UGBs are a function of supply constraints on urban land, timing constraints (the expectation of future zoning changes), and location constraints (amenity and disamenity values of land uses in close proximity to the
boundary). The other primary implication of implementing UGBs is their effect on housing mix, form, and prices. This is related to the effects UGBs have on land values, as land comprises one of the largest costs in residential development. It is concluded in the literature that UGBs generally affect housing mix and form in the sense that economic incentives and changing cost structures for developers encourage them to build within urbanized areas, and at higher densities. This also results in more multifamily housing being built. This affects housing prices in that the prices of attached forms of housing are expected to fall. Whether or how these drops in housing prices for these specific housing forms offsets the overall rise in housing prices due to higher land values has yet to be conclusively determined.

Finally, the literature seems to suggest that UGBs have been effective at preserving renewable resource lands, and at containing urban sprawl. The main criticisms of UGBs -- that they contribute to rather than alleviate urban sprawl, that they are riddled with political and legal problems, that they unduly raise housing prices, and that they become hardened and inflexible policy instruments -- do not detract from the overall validity and effectiveness of UGBs as an instrument of growth management policy. This is so because such arguments are often preferentially conceived, and are not convincingly substantiated with compelling evidence illustrating causal relationships. The arguments of Lasser, Porter, Downs, and Fischel seem to rely heavily on appeals to authorities without clear and convincing evidence to support their claims. It is important to note that, if poorly designed and implemented, UGBs can be disastrous for municipalities, regions, and states. If properly designed and implemented, UGBs can be very

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20 Florida's Growth Management Act mandates the use of UGBs, but does little to ensure policies are interjurisdictionally coordinated, or that there are local supportive regulatory frameworks. The result is that the broader UGB policy in Florida is thwarted at local levels and is thus rendered ineffectual (DeGrove, 1992, 1986). To a smaller degree, one also could look at the "first generation" UGB policies of Metro Portland (see Chapter 5), and see that flaws in policy design have resulted in underdensification and urban fringe development.
effective at meeting growth management objectives. They are a policy instrument meant to be employed in concert with other supportive land use policies and regulatory frameworks. As such, the literature supports the claim that they are an important element within a growth management program that may determine its success.

Therefore in light of the information presented above, this thesis argues that, theoretically, UGBs are an extremely effective growth management tool. This statement, of course, is qualified in the sense that UGBs can only be effective to the degree that they are, or are perceived to be, static. In this sense they are a better growth management tool than is traditional zoning on a large scale. Zoning can be changed or amended with relative ease. UGBs on the other hand, are able to provide long term certainty with respect to how urban areas grow. Again, however, it must be stressed that this thesis argues in favour of using UGBs that are not easily amenable, for it is their long-term static nature that makes them effective instruments of growth management policy, and which are implemented in conjunction with supportive policies (such as inclusionary housing programs to offset changes in housing prices, and renewable resource land preservation schemes) and complementary local regulatory regimes. UGBs are also superior to zoning in that they have a regional scope that often transcends the jurisdictions of many local authorities. For this reason, UGBs form an overarching policy common to all of its applicable jurisdictions, which hence contributes to the assurance in the contiguity of urban growth.

Finally, UGBs are viewed in this thesis as a more appropriate growth management tool than are land preservation programs, such as the Agricultural Land Reserve. This is so because, as will be made evident in the following chapter, UGBs are a growth management tool, whereas land preservation programs by definition are intended to preserve certain land uses. Land
preservation programs may have an incidental effect on the shape of urban growth, but they are seldom intended to be used to contain urban growth (see Chapters 4 & 5). Indeed they often comprise part of a larger growth management program in order to add a preservationist dimension to such programs, but it would be a theoretical stretch to argue their sole application as an instrument of growth management policy without qualifying that argument with the fact that the intent of land preservation programs is not to contain urban growth. This thesis views land preservation programs, such as the Agricultural Land Reserve, as an important element of a broader effort aimed at containing urban growth, specifically through the use of UGBs. Thus it will become apparent in later chapters that UGBs and land preservation programs together, and in conjunction with other supportive policies, are an extremely robust strategy for containing urban growth.
CHAPTER 3 - GROWTH MANAGEMENT IN THE LOWER MAINLAND

1. Introduction

The focus of this chapter will shift the discussion from a theoretical examination of UGBs to a detailed look at the GVRD's primary growth management strategy, the Livable Region Strategic Plan 1996 (LRSP). In this context, provincial efforts at redirecting growth will also be presented through an examination of the Growth Strategies Statutes Amendments Act 1995. As well, the role the Agricultural Land Reserve has played in managing urban growth will be discussed. It should be emphasized that the purpose of this chapter is not necessarily to critique present policies. Rather, this chapter will examine in some detail the substantive content of both GVRD and provincial growth management policies in order to lay the necessary foundation to place them in comparative perspective with the two case studies. The purpose of this chapter is therefore to present the current status of growth management in the Lower Mainland and in the province in order to establish the policy and regulatory framework within which UGBs could be utilized. Finally, it will be shown in this chapter: how UGBs might fit into this overall growth management structure; that the GVRD, and indeed the Lower Mainland, is a suitable candidate for the application of UGBs; and, finally, what the application of UGB policy would add to current efforts aimed at managing growth.

2. The Livable Region Strategic Plan: Final Edition 1996

Managing growth in the Lower Mainland has been a focus of the GVRD since the 1940s. The original 1976 Livable Region Strategy recognized the need for more compact urban development as a means of accommodating much of the growth confronting the region. Although
the 1976 strategy was never formally adopted, the principles espoused therein have survived for two decades with little change. Indeed, the strategy has evolved, culminating in the 1996 edition of the LRSP, which rejects a status-quo approach to managing growth -- that is, it reflects the need to change current patterns of urban development -- and which is comprised of four primary elements: 1) *Protect the Green Zone*; 2) *Achieve a Compact Metropolitan Region*; 3) *Build Complete Communities*; and 4) *Increase Transportation Choice* (GVRD, 1996a, 2-3). The first two of these strategies are considered in detail below.21

2.1. **Protect the Green Zone**

The 1996 *Creating Our Future* Green Zone Principle states that:

The region will manage its growth to preserve green areas, wildlife habitat, provide regional parks and recreation open space, maintain farming and contain urban sprawl...[and will] Establish with municipalities an *Urban Containment Policy* that identifies Greater Vancouver’s ‘*Green Line*’ [emphasis added] beyond which urban development will not be allowed and that defines the region’s Green Zone (GVRD, 1996, 19).

This principle indicates that the intent behind creating a “Green Zone” is to protect and conserve Greater Vancouver’s green space, including renewable resource lands and watersheds. Moreover, the Green Zone policy is also intended to establish frameworks for the creation of a set of urban limit lines, UGBs, or in the GVRD’s words, a “Green Line”. Therefore, the two stated purposes of the Green Zone are to serve include the preservation of “green” lands (ecologically significant and renewable resource lands, as well as parks) and the containment of urban growth.

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21 *Increase Transportation Choice*, while it is an important component to the LRSP, is not examined in detail in this chapter, largely because this chapter focuses on strictly growth management initiatives associated with the plan. Nevertheless, the author recognizes the importance of linking transportation and land use, and so these links are alluded to in the context of discussing the other three sections of the strategy. Finally, exclusion of this part of the strategy as well as that which addresses regional town centres is for the sake of brevity.
In terms of protecting ecologically significant and renewable resource lands, the policy establishes a “collective vision of where the region’s important ‘green’ lands are” (GVRD, 1993b, 3). Through the identification of “the region’s natural assets, including the agricultural lands”, a collective effort among member municipalities to preserve these areas can be made (GVRD, 1993b, 3). The “natural assets” the Green Zone is intended to preserve includes, but is not limited to: ecologically sensitive habitat lands, agricultural and other renewable resource lands, watersheds, floodplains and hazard lands, and the region’s outdoor recreation system.

The Green Zone policy acknowledges that the Lower Mainland contains some of the most productive agricultural lands in the country -- resulting from an extended growing season made possible by a mild climate and adequate rainfall, and from the fact that approximately one half of the region’s 55,000 hectares of agricultural land is considered to be prime quality, as opposed to the provincial average of 25% (GVRD, 1993b, 9). The agriculture industry, thus, generates “substantial income and employment for regional residents”, and consequently is deserving of a supportive regional land use and growth management policy (GVRD, 1993b, 9). The Green Zone policy identifies three ways in which agriculture is potentially important to the region, and so must be protected from urban encroachment.

1. The high soil quality and mild climate of the region provide for a diversity of agricultural goods being produced. Indeed, “nearly everything grown province-wide can be produced in Greater Vancouver - a truly remarkable fact when one realizes that only 1.4 per cent of the province’s agricultural lands are in Greater Vancouver”;
2. Farming in the Lower Mainland is important because of the positive economic impacts resulting from its presence. As of 1991, farms in the region directly employed in excess of 5,000 people, and produced gross receipts of over $300 million (accounting

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22 Referred to in the policy as “Ecologically Important Lands”.
23 Referred to in the policy as “Renewable Resource Lands”.
24 Collectively referred to in the policy as “Community Health Lands”.
25 Referred to in the policy as “Outdoor Recreation and Scenic Lands”. Ecologically Important Lands, Renewable Resource Lands, Community Health Lands, and Outdoor Recreation and Scenic Lands collectively comprise the “Green Zone”. 
for 25% of total farm income in the entire province). Just the combined effects of agricultural production, food processing, and distribution, accounts for a $3 billion contribution to the regional economy. The Green Zone policy, thus, views agriculture in the Lower Mainland as a “stabilizer in the region’s and province’s economy”; and finally,

3. Farmland in the Lower Mainland provides a rural setting urban residents can utilize as open and recreational space. As well, the close proximity of farms in this region to urbanized areas affords urbanites the opportunity to personally experience farming, hence becoming more educated about its importance to the region and province (GVRD, 1993b, 9).

Indeed there are other arguments premised on sustainability principles for maintaining these agricultural lands (See Rees in ALC, Up not Out, 1993). The two major themes emerging in these arguments include reducing both imported carrying capacity and exported ecological decline. Rees’ argument is summarized in the following statement:

An ecological economic approach to agriculture is therefore more risk averse. Soils and arable land is considered to be a form of productive natural capital with only limited potential for technological substitution. Its unique properties and immeasurable value as an essential component of our global life support system justify the exclusion of adequate stocks of agricultural land from competing land markets. In short, a range of considerations and values beyond short-term efficiency bear on critical land use decisions. This is more likely to ensure food security in a world of rapid ecological change and political uncertainty (Rees in ALC, Up not Out, 1993).

Rees therefore adds a sustainability dimension to the argument favouring the preservation of farmland that is implied in the Green Zone policy but not made explicit; that agricultural land must never be considered as a “competing” land use. Rather it must be viewed as important in its own right, and thus preserved on that basis. This is so because of the irreversality of changing agricultural land uses to more urban land uses. In other words, in considering the preservation of agricultural land in the region, classical economic efficiency arguments fail to consider the full spectrum of issues associated with this specific type of land use decision.
It is clear that while the Green Zone is intended to protect valuable ecological resources, it is also meant to serve a growth management function in the sense that Green Zone land will be used as a barrier to sprawling patterns of development. Therefore, the second primary purpose the Green Zone is intended to serve is that of containing urban growth within well defined boundaries. The policy states that it is imperative to define:

...the future urban area so that planning has an awareness of the limits of urban growth. Containment of the urban area will add to the vitality and identity of our community cores, limit expenditures of scarce resources on costly, inefficient infrastructure, lessen the environmental and social costs of urban sprawl, make a good public transit system a real possibility, and lessen pressure on ‘green’ areas for conversion to residential subdivisions and other urban uses (GVRD, 1993b, 3).

By acting as a physical barrier to urban growth, the Green Zone can be viewed as being similar to a greenbelt. The primary difference between the Green Zone lands and a greenbelt in a growth management context is that, while Green Zone lands are inviolable to urban encroachment, they are not a contiguous physical barrier to urban development in the same way greenbelts are. There are holes in the Green Zone (GVRD, 1995, 12). This is a result of the way in which Green Zone lands were designated. They are a collection of ecologically significant land parcels submitted by individual municipalities who wanted to ensure the integrity of these land uses. Because of this process, initially there was no concerted effort to ensure the contiguity of Green Zone lands, and so the development of a regional greenbelt per se has yet to be realized. This is so largely because the GVRD never intended the Green Zone to act as a greenbelt, but rather as a set of urban limit lines demarcating developable from protected lands. Thus, the Green Zone is a preservationist strategy for protecting certain land uses, and which therefore only considers urban containment as negative marketing.
Nevertheless, the 1993 statement indicates that municipal submissions of land to be included in the Green Zone shows a commitment on the part of those municipalities to “urban containment boundaries” (GVRD, 1993b, 20). This is a very important statement because it reinforces the growth management function of the Green Zone. By implication, the GVRD intends to use the Green Zone as a discontiguous set of UGBs, although nowhere is it stated that this would be the primary function of the Green Zone. Perhaps the strongest statement made by the GVRD regarding the Green Zone’s growth management function as a UGB is as follows:

The Green Zone is an effort of the GVRD and its member municipalities to establish an urban containment boundary [emphasis added] and protect the important “green” lands within the GVRD (GVRD, 1993b, 23).

This is further evidence that the policy intends for inviolable Green Zone lands to be used as physical barriers to contain urban growth. And as of 1993, approximately two-thirds of the GVRD’s total land base was deemed to be Green Zone land (GVRD, 1993b, 20). The distribution of Green Zone land within the region is presented in Table 3-1 and in Figure 3-1.

Table 3-1 Distribution of Greater Vancouver Green Zone Lands

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>North Shore</td>
<td>49,000 hectares</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burrard Peninsula</td>
<td>3,900 hectares</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North East Sector</td>
<td>60,200 hectares</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bowen Island</td>
<td>6,000 hectares</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richmond</td>
<td>5,300 hectares</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South of Fraser</td>
<td>25,200 hectares</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Langley’s</td>
<td>23,700 hectares</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: GVRD, 1993b, 20)
Figure 3-1 The Greater Vancouver Green Zone

Land Areas:
- Green Zone areas
- Agricultural Lands in the Green Zone
- Municipal boundaries

Water Areas:
- Wetland areas
- Tidal flats

Areas under municipal consideration
- West Vancouver: pending Official Community Plan review
- Anmore and Belcarra: pending further planning studies
The Green Zone policy identifies several "key issues" that must be addressed in the refinement of the policy in order to ensure its implementation and future success. First, the GVRD must create and maintain linkages within the Green Zone network and "between urban and Green Zone areas". Second, competing land uses within the Green Zone lands must be managed. Third, the urban/rural fringe must be addressed in both regional and municipal plans in ways that guarantee the compatibility of adjacent land uses within and outside the Green Zone boundary. And, finally, there must be intergovernmental (municipal-municipal and regional-municipal) coordination of policy to ensure the promotion and maintenance of the Green Zone's integrity as a UGB (GVRD, 1993b, 22-3).

While the GVRD views the creation and maintenance of the Green Zone as an intergovernmental partnership endeavor, it also recognizes that both municipalities and the regional districts are perhaps ill equipped to ensure the protection of the Green Zone (GVRD, 1992). Hence, the Green Zone element to the LRSP suggests the exploration of both current, but unutilized, and new planning tools to increase the ability of all the parties to the Green Zone to protect its integrity (GVRD, 1993b, 25,53).26 This thesis argues that legislated growth management in the form of UGBs is the most effective way of ensuring the preservation of the "green line's" integrity. A well designed regional UGB of the sorts examined in Chapters 4 and 5 would clearly set a limit on urban expansion, it would add certainty to local policies and land use regulations through stringent policy coordination requirements, and it would require local authorities to plan for a common objective -- maintaining and improving the functional value of the regional UGB. At this point, however, it is important to understand the extent to which

26 The policy suggests the creation of a park and outdoor recreation system as a means of achieving this. This thesis, however, will examine in later chapters other, more growth management oriented, ways of protecting the "Green Line" (i.e., legislated UGBs for the region).
UGBs, or some version thereof, are being considered in the region by the GVRD. The above detailed discussion of the GVRD’s Green Zone strategies illustrates that the GVRD intends to contain urban growth through the establishment of a set of protected land areas, the collective boundaries of which would act as urban limit lines. This strategy is premised on negative marketing, resulting in discontiguous and perhaps incoherent barriers to urban expansion. Again this can be attributed to the fact that the Green Zone’s primary function is to preserve certain land areas, as opposed to containing urban growth, a secondary function of the Green Zone, despite statements that seem to imply otherwise. Finally, with the implementation of this policy, the GVRD hopes that planning will henceforth proceed from the premise that growth can be directed in presently urbanized settings, despite the rate and magnitude of the growth confronting a given area.

2.2. Achieve a Compact Metropolitan Region

Under the rubric of compact metropolitan region policies can be found the GVRD’s growth concentration policies. Generally, the compact metropolitan region policies seek to identify locations in the region that could intensify, and thus absorb much of the region’s future growth (GVRD, 1995, 6). Essentially, the compact metropolitan region policies are meant to diversify, densify (residential, commercial and employment densities), and increase mobility within the region. At the same time, the policies are meant to alleviate growth pressures on Fraser Valley communities by redirecting that growth inward.

The most significant aspect of this policy is its heavy emphasis on redirecting regional growth into a “growth concentration area” (also previously referred to in policy as a
“metropolitan focus area”). The GVRD’s vision for what a compact metropolitan region looks like is as follows:

A compact metropolitan region will have as its base a metropolitan focus area - a continuous urbanized area centred on a downtown core, regional town centres, municipal town centres, and other specialized urban activity locations. These urban centres will:

- be connected to their surrounding communities and to each other by appropriate and efficient urban public transportation systems;
- provide the mechanism for improving the ratio of jobs to labour force in communities;
- be accessible by diverse transportation systems that are not dependent exclusively on the automobile;
- offer a diversity of housing types and costs; and
- ensure that social, cultural and recreational facilities, together with jobs, shops, and services, are accessible to residents (GVRD, 1993a, 25).

This compact metropolitan region concept was one of many urban form options considered by the GVRD in the Creating Our Future process, and it has come to form the basis for the current LRSP’s growth management strategy.

The achievement of a compact metropolitan region, however, is predicated on certain subregions absorbing more growth than they would under a do nothing -- business as usual -- option. The subregions expected to form this growth concentration area include: Vancouver; Burnaby/New Westminster; Richmond; North Surrey/Delta; and the North East Sector\(^{27}\) (GVRD, 1993a, 27). Logically, therefore, growth outside the growth concentration area would be less than would otherwise occur if current trends were allowed to continue. Also, growth occurring outside of the metropolitan focus area is expected to take the form of compact and complete communities.

When it is stated that growth will be faster within and slower outside the metropolitan focus area under the growth management efforts of the LRSP, what is being referred to is

\(^{27}\) The North East Sector includes the municipalities of Port Moody, Coquitlam, Anmore, Belcarra, Port Coquitlam, and adjacent electoral areas.
population growth, housing growth, and employment growth. In terms of housing growth, by 2021 66% of the region’s projected 836,000 households will be located in the growth concentration area, as opposed to 54% if current trends were allowed to continue (GVRD, 1993a, 28). With respect to population, the growth concentration area’s share of regional population is expected to be 65% in 2021, as opposed to 52% under current trends. And finally, in terms of jobs, “the Livable Region Strategy would improve the current jobs to resident worker imbalance to 101 jobs per 100 resident workers in this area, and 85 per 100 outside it” by 2021 (GVRD, 1993a, 29). This concentration in growth will be most apparent in the original four RTCs; they will experience an increase in their share of the region’s employment from 8% in 1991 to 16% in 2021, which amounts to a tripling of employment - from 64,100 jobs in 1991 to 226,000 jobs in 2021 (GVRD, 1993a, 47). These same four areas will also experience a rise in resident workers from 70,700 in 1991 to 237,000 in 2021, which is reflected in the jobs per resident worker balance (91 per 100 in 1991 to 95 per 100 in 2021) (GVRD, 1993a, 47). And finally, with regard to residential densities, the growth concentration area is expected to densify considerably under the LRSP, from an average gross density of 3.5 du/a in 1991 to 7.1 du/a in 2021, a density comparable to metropolitan Vancouver (GVRD, 1993a, 50). This increase in densities will largely be accommodated through infill and higher density housing forms in areas surrounding employment centres and transit corridors, hence reducing the forces perpetuating autodependency.

The tables and maps presented below illustrate how the 2021 vision in the LRSP differs from a scenario representing the continuation of current trends. Of particular note is the

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28 As opposed to a gross density of 5.9 du/a if current trends were allowed to continue.
redirection of population growth -- which would otherwise occur up the Fraser Valley -- to the metropolitan focus area, and the changes in transportation patterns that are likely to result from the implementation of the 2021 compact metropolitan region scenario. It should be noted, however, that the maps below are technically considered to be “unofficial” by the GVRD, but they nevertheless graphically represent the basic intent of the LRSP.

Table 3-2 Distribution of Growth - LRSP Growth Management Targets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Greater Vancouver Regional District</th>
<th>Households</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>Employment (Excluding Construction)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1991 Total</td>
<td>609,000</td>
<td>1,603,000</td>
<td>716,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ground-Oriented Households</td>
<td>401,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apartment Households</td>
<td>208,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2021 Total</td>
<td>1,135,000</td>
<td>2,676,000</td>
<td>1,317,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ground-Oriented Households</td>
<td>741,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apartment Households</td>
<td>394,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Growth Concentration Area</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1991 Total</td>
<td>407,000</td>
<td>1,044,800</td>
<td>507,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ground-Oriented Households</td>
<td>244,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apartment Households</td>
<td>163,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2021 Total</td>
<td>786,000</td>
<td>1,832,000</td>
<td>951,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ground-Oriented Households</td>
<td>491,000</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apartment Households</td>
<td>295,000</td>
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</table>

(Source: GVRD 1996a, 9).

The numbers in these tables convey the intentions underlying the LRSP. This scenario is also graphically represented in Figures 3-2 and 3-3.
Figure 3-2 Distribution of Growth Under A Current Trends Scenario

Figure 3-3 Distribution of Growth Under the Livable Region Strategy
Achieving the Livable Region Strategy’s vision, and especially a tight and compact metropolitan focus area, is not easy. In implementing the *Livable Region Strategy* so that a compact metropolitan region is realized, the plan stresses the importance of creating and maintaining partnerships within and among member municipalities, as well as with adjoining regional districts and provincial agencies. These partnerships are intended to work toward ensuring municipalities include within their official community plans, in accordance with new provincial legislation, actions contributing to the implementation of the *Livable Region Strategy*’s goals and objectives. Such actions include enacting supportive zoning and subdivision regulations. Thus, in achieving a metropolitan focus area, the GVRD would work with its member municipalities in creating the zoning required to “redirect” growth to this area (GVRD, 1996, 25-7). For example, the GVRD states that it will

> pursue an improved jobs and labour force balance throughout the region through encouraging the City of Vancouver to further heighten emphasis on residential development and reduce commercial development and through marketing appropriate employment locations as regional town centres (GVRD, 1996, 24).\(^{29}\)

As well, the GVRD, in cooperation with member municipalities and with provincial authorities (BC Transit and the BC Transportation Financing Authority), will help create the compact metropolitan region through related transportation investments (GVRD, 1996, 27). Finally, specifically with respect to implementing Green Zone policies, the GVRD will work with all levels of government to develop plans and policies -- such as purchasing or transferring development rights programs -- that protect Green Zone land. A strong component of this implementation

\(^{29}\) A specific example of this is the rezoning of Vancouver’s urban frame (Yaletown, Gastown, Coal Harbour, and False Creek) from industrial/commercial to primarily residential uses.
strategy includes working with municipalities in the preparation of their regional context statements, which add regional perspectives to local official community plans.

Therefore, in terms of exactly how the GVRD purports to achieve this vision for the region, the LRSP states:

In order to implement the Livable Region Strategic Plan through a consensus/partnership process, the GVRD Board will:
- sustain a consensus/partnership-based regional strategic planning process directed towards achievement of the Creating Our Future vision.
- implement the Livable Region Strategic Plan through the delivery of GVRD services and through partnerships with GVRD member municipalities, other Lower Mainland local governments, the provincial government, the federal government and other organizations.
- monitor regional change and evaluate progress towards the Livable Region Strategic Plan goals and targets.
- periodically report to the public and Livable Region Strategic Plan partners on progress towards the goals and targets, and undertake a substantial review of the Strategic Plan five years after adoption (GVRD, 1996a, 8).

Perhaps the major challenge facing the plan’s implementation is creating and maintaining concurrence with and between municipal official community plans, despite the regional context planning requirements of the Growth Strategies Statutes Amendments Act, 1995. Also, certain municipalities are invariably expected to densify considerably while others are expected to forego development in order for the growth targets in this plan to be realized. As an implementation measure, the GVRD discusses the need to compensate those municipalities expected to forego development opportunities in order for the growth targets to be attained, and to ensure the protection of regional open space (GVRD, 1996, 21). Furthermore, peoples’ desire to live in ground-oriented housing must be addressed in the densification process designed to make the compact region a physical reality. If this demand for such housing is ignored in the

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30 See section 3.1.2.
31 The policy does not specify what “compensation” means.
implementation of this plan, the chances of the growth targets being achieved in the critical areas greatly decrease.

3. Provincial Efforts at Managing Growth

In this section, provincial growth management will be examined. In relation to the LRSP, the Provincial *Growth Strategies Statutes Amendments Act 1995* will be discussed in respect of lending the strategy greater recognition through its implementation as a formal growth strategy. As well, the role the Agricultural Land Reserve has played in containing urban growth will be briefly examined.


For the purposes of this discussion, it is important to note that the *Growth Strategies Act* introduces three new planning tools, each of which is aimed at ensuring more concerted growth management initiatives among various levels of planning authorities. These tools are: the preparation of regional growth strategies by regional districts; the preparation of regional context statements by municipalities; and the creation of partnerships which take the form of implementation agreements.

3.1.1. Regional Growth Strategies

The LRSP is the official regional growth strategy in the GVRD. Section 942.11 (1) of the Act states that the purpose of a growth strategy is to "promote human settlement that is socially, economically, and environmentally healthy and that makes efficient use of public facilities and services, land and other resources". 942.11 (2) of the Act also stipulates a number of purposes the growth strategy should work toward achieving. Among these are the following:
(a) avoiding urban sprawl and ensuring that development takes place where adequate facilities exist or can be provided in a timely, economic and efficient manner;
(b) settlement patterns that minimize the use of automobiles and encourage walking, bicycling, and the efficient use of public transit;
(c) the efficient movement of goods and people while making effective use of transportation and utility corridors;
(d) protecting environmentally sensitive areas;
(e) maintaining the integrity of a secure and productive resource base, including the agricultural and forest land reserves;
(f) economic development that supports the unique character of communities;
(g) reducing and preventing air, land and water pollution;
(h) adequate, affordable and appropriate housing;
(i) adequate inventories of suitable land and resources for future settlement;
(j) protecting the quality and quantity of ground water and surface water;
(k) settlement patterns that minimize the risks associated with natural hazards;
(l) preserving, creating, and linking urban and rural open space including parks and recreation areas;
(m) planning for energy supply and promoting efficient use, conservation, and alternative forms of energy;
(n) good stewardship of land, sites and structures with cultural heritage value.

According to the Act, therefore, a regional growth strategy is clearly a “vision” of how future growth can best be accommodated without significantly affecting the region’s livability (Ministry of Municipal Affairs, 1995a, 5). What is also important about this list of purposes is its substantive similarity to the goals and objectives associated with formulating and implementing urban containment policies, and especially UGBs.

The content of regional growth strategies is naturally related to the purposes they are meant to serve. Section 942.12 generally stipulates that growth strategies are meant to guide growth to areas in which it could best be accommodated. Specifically, Section 942.12 (2) states that the planning time frame of a growth strategy must be at least twenty years, and that a growth strategy include the following: a “comprehensive statement” regarding the future growth of the region in relation to social, economic, and environmental objectives; a population and employment projection(s) for the twenty year period covered by the growth strategy; and actions “proposed for the regional district to provide for the needs of the projected population in relation to housing, transportation, regional district services, parks and natural areas, and economic development”.

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While these matters comprise the "minimum" set of issues to be covered in the growth strategy, the legislation recognizes the need for flexibility, and thus the need for regional growth strategies to deal with other regional matters not specified in the Act. However, at this point it should be noted that what comprises a growth strategy is somewhat vague, and this may result in many different interpretations of that Act’s true intent. This, of course, bears on its ability to ensure certain matters of regional significance, such as growth management, are duly addressed by regional districts and municipalities.

The *Growth Strategies Statutes Amendments Act 1995* is enabling legislation. This means that the preparation of regional growth strategies by regional districts is strictly voluntary, unless unusual circumstances\(^{32}\) require the interdiction of the Minister of Municipal Affairs, who may require that a regional district prepare a regional growth strategy (Ministry of Municipal Affairs, 1995a, 8).

In order for the growth strategy to be implemented, it must be approved by all affected municipalities. Following a second reading of the growth strategy by the initiating regional board, and following a public hearing, but before the third and final reading, the board must submit the growth strategy to: each municipal council affected by the growth strategy; the board of each regional district that is adjoining an area to which the regional growth strategy is to apply; and, to the facilitator or the Minister (Ministry of Municipal Affairs, 199b, S. 942.19). The legislation also provides various mechanisms by which disagreements between various agencies regarding acceptance of the growth strategy can be resolved. These mechanisms range from facilitated negotiation, to non binding arbitration, and if necessary, to full arbitration (Section 942.23 (3)).

\(^{32}\) Section 942.14 (2) of the Act outlines that significant change in population, economic development, or an "aspect of growth or development that involves coordination between local governments or affects more than one local government" are things constituting unusual circumstances.
Once agreement is reached among affected agencies, the growth strategy is adopted by the board by bylaw. Following the passage of the growth strategy into law, all subsequent passage of bylaws by the regional district, and by all affected greater boards or improvement district boards, must be consistent with the growth strategy (just as all local zoning and subdivision bylaws passed by municipalities must be consistent with their official community plans). Therefore, this requirement "ensures that regional growth strategies have the intended binding effect on actions of local bodies" (Ministry of Municipal Affairs, 1995a, 20).

### 3.1.2. Regional Context Statements

Another planning tool introduced in this legislation is the regional context statement. All municipalities affected by a regional growth strategy must include a regional context statement in their official community plan. The statement must identify, in accordance with Section 942.28 (2) of the Act, the following:

(a) the relationship between the official community plan and the matters referred to in section 942.12 (2) and any other regional matters included under section 942.12 (3) [both were mentioned earlier], and

(b) if applicable, how the official community plan is to be made consistent with the regional growth strategy over time.

While regional growth strategies must be approved by the affected municipalities, the regional context statement requires acceptance by the regional board responsible for initiating the growth strategy. This process of "cross-acceptance" is similar to Gale's state-negotiated model of state sponsored growth management, which is discussed in Chapter 2. Disputes that may arise over the acceptance/rejection of regional context statements are dealt with in the same way that disputes over reaching agreement regarding regional growth strategies are addressed in the legislation.
Thus, in general, the regional context statement is a mechanism that ensures that municipalities consider the regional perspective in their official community plans. This is an attempt to interjurisdictionally coordinate planning policies. As demonstrated earlier in this thesis, such mechanisms ensuring the interjurisdictional coordination of policy are crucial to the success of any growth management scheme, and especially with respect to UGBs. As to whether the use of regional context statements will actually ensure the interjurisdictional coordination of policies, it is important to understand that the legislation is not inclusive. That is, only municipalities affected by a growth strategy must prepare regional context statements, and this may prove to be a major flaw in the legislation insofar as adjoining municipalities unaffected by the growth strategy may enact policies and land use regulations that are counterproductive to a neighboring regional district’s growth strategy. Therefore, while it is the intent of the legislation to interjurisdictionally coordinate policies, it fails to ensure that local development regulations from municipalities in different regional districts are consistent with broader goals and objectives.

3.1.3. Implementation Agreements

The third new planning tool introduced under this legislation is the implementation agreement. Under Section 942.3 of the Act, local governments affected by a regional growth strategy may enter into agreements relating to the strategy’s implementation with other affected agencies. For example, the Provincial government may enter into agreements requiring them to “act consistently with a regional growth strategy and to take actions necessary to implement a regional growth strategy”. Essentially, the implementation agreement ensures that provincial government agencies make capital expenditures in ways that are consistent with the implementation of the regional growth strategy (Ministry of Municipal Affairs, 1995a, 2). Other
agencies that may enter into such partnerships may include, but not be limited to: first nations; school district boards, greater boards, improvement district boards, and other local authorities.

Overall, the *Growth Strategies Statutes Amendments Act 1995* is an important piece of legislation pertaining to growth management in the province, and especially in the Lower Mainland. It clarifies the purposes of managing growth, it delineates what should comprise a growth strategy, it provides a planning process for formulating and implementing regional growth strategies, and, perhaps most importantly, it attempts to establish a clear framework for the interjurisdictional coordination of policies and land use regulations. However, while the *Growth Strategies Act* does represent a progression in the consideration of growth management in the province, it nevertheless fails to account for the possible need to contain urban growth. Indeed urban containment could form the basis of a regional growth strategy, but there are no mechanisms to ensure this is considered by regional districts and municipalities as a viable growth management policy option. More specifically, the legislation lacks inclusion of specific issues relating to punitive actions taken against non-compliant agencies (what recourse is there to ensure that member agencies live up to their word as manifested in the growth strategy?). It also lacks explicit discussion regarding the possibility of using UGBs as a tool for containing urban growth, and as a tool for achieving the stated purposes of a growth strategy. Simply stated, the legislation is progressive in attempting to achieve interjurisdictional coordination of policies, but it fails to mandate urban containment, and it lacks provisions clearly delineating the implementation and enforcement of growth strategies.

Thus, in looking at how UGBs might fit into this overall framework, it seems clear that their imposition in the Lower Mainland would only be possible if: (1) they are adopted under the
guise of a “regional growth strategy”; and (2) the regions comprising the Lower Mainland in fact choose to initiate such a regional growth strategy, which is unlikely given the approvals process for the regional growth strategy. The chances of the regional districts, along with their member municipalities, in the Lower Mainland reaching consensus regarding urban containment lines is low, considering the obvious differences in opinion in respect of managing growth (let alone containing it). This also assumes that the Minister of Municipal Affairs does not choose to require these regional districts to prepare regional growth strategies. Therefore, while the Act does not make impossible the imposition of UGBs in the region, it does not make their imposition any more probable, despite giving the LRSP, which implies the need for such growth management tools, legal status (GVRD, 1996a, 4).

3.2. The Agricultural Land Reserve and Urban Containment

The Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) has often been referred to as a growth management tool. There is no doubt that the ALR’s existence has had an effect on shaping urban development in the Lower Mainland. However, to say that it has been actively used for this purpose would be conjecture (Martin Collins, 1997, pers. comm.). Clearly, the objectives of the Agricultural Land Commission (ALC) in the past have been to promote farm activity, and to preserve farming as a land use in the province, consequently affecting the shape of urban development. In this regard, the ALC has very much been a single purpose agency, and this is supported by their mandate as set forth in the Agricultural Land Commission Act 1994.

The Agricultural Land Commission Act 1994 clearly delineates the objectives of the ALC. Section 7 of the Act states that:

(1) It is the object of the commission to
    (a) preserve agricultural land,
(b) encourage the establishment and maintenance of farms, and the use of land in an agricultural reserve compatible with agricultural purposes,
(c) assist municipalities and regional districts in the preparation of land reserve plans required under this Act, and
(d) encourage municipalities, regional districts, first nations and ministers, ministries and agents of the governments of British Columbia and Canada to support and accommodate farm use of agricultural land in their bylaws, plans and policies.

Although the original *Agricultural Land Commission Act 1973* stipulated, as a secondary mandate of the ALC, the protection of both greenbelt land surrounding urban centres and future landbanks for urban and industrial development (Miller in ALC, Up Not Out, 1993), it is evident that managing or containing urban growth is not a formal mandate of the ALC, as set forth in the 1994 consolidation of the Act. Nevertheless, containing urban growth has and remains to be an interest of the ALC. This was a major theme in a symposium held by the ALC in the spring of 1993, entitled “Urban Growth and the Agricultural Land Reserve: Up not Out”.

While it is not an explicit objective of the ALC to manage urban growth, that does not mean that the ALR has not acted as a *de facto* greenbelt or UGB. Indeed by not allowing the encroachment of urban land uses on Lower Mainland farmland, the ALR has played a role in containing urban growth. How effective this has been is a matter for debate. Certainly it can be argued that a discontiguous, *de facto* UGB, such as the ALR, has contributed to leapfrog urban development, thus encouraging exurban development in the Fraser Valley. Contrary to this point of view, it could also be said that the ALR’s presence has encouraged more intense development in existing urban centres, resulting in more dense and compact urban development. The problem is that there is no conclusive empirical evidence to suggest which or both of the two scenarios is more likely to be the case. Nevertheless, as a partial outgrowth of the symposium mentioned
above, the ALC has prepared a strategic plan which clearly indicates a more active role for the ALC in managing/containing urban growth.

Perhaps one of the most prevalent themes emerging from the symposium workshop sessions is that “local governments experiencing high rates of growth should develop sustainable regional growth management plans which establish urban [growth] boundaries” (ALC, Up not Out, 1993). This concern is reflected in the *B.C. Agricultural Land Commission Strategic Plan 1995*, which identifies urban growth, and the resultant urban development pressures on agricultural land, as being one of the most significant challenges facing the commission, and the integrity of ALR land. The plan’s strategic direction in this regard is to “actively participate in land use planning to facilitate agricultural economic activity and to minimize land use conflicts, particularly in regions of rapid urban growth” (ALC, 1995, 8). Specifically, this means that the ALC is prepared to take a more active role in land use planning in the province — largely through providing technical assistance to agencies preparing land use plans, and by helping growth management strategies ensure greater consistency between municipal, regional, and ALR land use plans “so that urban growth is compact and coordinated” (ALC, 1995, 8). Therefore, under the direction of this strategic plan, it is evident that in order for the ALC to achieve its seemingly singular objective -- that of protecting farmland and promoting farming -- it must participate more actively in regional growth management initiatives.

Overall, in examining the role the ALR has played in containing urban growth in the province, and especially in the Lower Mainland, there is no denying that the ALR’s presence has shaped urban development patterns. As well, given an increasingly expanding interest in containing urban growth, the ALC’s role in the formulation and implementation of formal UGBs
in the Lower Mainland must not be ignored. Indeed, the ALC could play a critical role in the
development, and perhaps enforcement, of UGB policies.

4. **Summary and Conclusions**

The purpose of this chapter was to review the current growth management initiatives of
both the GVRD and the Province of British Columbia in order to put them in comparative
perspective with the two subsequent case studies that use UGB policies to help them manage their
growth. In terms of regional policies, the *Livable Region Strategic Plan 1996*, along with its
component parts, was examined in considerable detail. It was shown that urban containment is
being considered in the LRSP, and specifically within the Green Zone element of the plan
secondary to the preservation of ecologically significant and renewable resource lands. Green
Zone policies aim to delineate those lands in the region to be used for urban development from
those which should be preserved as “green” lands, thus establishing a series of urban limit lines.

With respect to the compact metropolitan region policies in the LRSP, it was illustrated
how future growth would be redirected to occur within a metropolitan focus area. By doing this,
much higher residential densities would be achieved, thus making the provision of greater public
transit services more possible. Better jobs to resident worker balances would also be achieved in
the regional town centres. Perhaps the most significant aspect of this policy, however, is its
strong emphasis on redirecting growth that would have otherwise occurred in the Fraser Valley to
more centralized locations within the region.

The contributions made by the province to growth management were also discussed. The
primary way the province has contributed to managing growth was by introducing the *Growth
Strategies Statutes Amendments Act 1995*, which establishes three new planning tools available to
regional districts and local authorities. These are: the regional growth strategy, the regional context statement, and the implementation agreement. Combined, these tools are intended to establish a framework for the interjurisdictional coordination of policies and land use regulations. Finally, the Act encourages that, through various provincial-regional partnerships, the funding of capital projects and maintenance of existing infrastructure be consistent with established regional growth strategies. While the substantive content of this Act is theoretically sound, the lack of a distinct urban containment goal as well as clear implementation and enforcement mechanisms significantly weaken the Act’s ability to ensure stated growth management objectives are met by local authorities.

Also, with respect to provincial initiatives in growth management, the role the Agricultural Land Reserve has played in containing urban growth was considered. It was concluded that, although the Agricultural Land Commission is not mandated by law to manage urban growth, the preservation of ALR land has been likened to a *de facto* urban containment policy. It was also illustrated that current urban growth pressures may require the ALC to take a more proactive role in the formulation of regional growth management plans, and in provincial land use planning. Finally, it was suggested that while the ALR has had incidental effects on the shape of urban development in the region, the ALC is not an agency mandated to contain growth, and so may not be an appropriate body for developing a comprehensive regional urban containment strategy utilizing UGBs. The ALC, however, would play a critical role in the overall strategy by continuing to ensure agricultural land is preserved.

The above discussion on current growth management initiatives in the Lower Mainland reveals that urban containment is a consideration of both the province and the GVRD. It seems
clear, however, that the region needs an urban containment policy, the status of which goes beyond mere consideration. Making UGBs in the region a policy in their own right is required in order for them to become an effective growth management tool for the Lower Mainland. The above policy framework premised on the LRSP, the Growth Strategies Act, and the ALC is not incompatible with this notion. In this sense, a separate UGB policy could either be an addition to the LRSP, or a separately designated Regional Growth Strategy in accordance with the Growth Strategies Act. The important point to understand is that the application of UGBs in the Lower Mainland is possible given the existing legal and growth management policy framework. UGBs are not meant to replace any existing policies. Instead, they would work in conjunction with those policies toward a more focused set of objectives -- containing urban growth within nonarbitrarily determined boundaries and preserving renewable resource lands. Finally, UGB policy in the region should not be viewed as redundant; UGBs would add clarity, certainty, and simplicity to a host of currently existing policies that allude to urban containment but do not operationalize the concept. In other words, many government agencies speak of the need to contain urban growth, but few, if any, state how this would be accomplished in policy, and what urban containment might mean for the region.

In terms of implementing the LRSP, and especially the compact metropolitan region policies, the GVRD seems to lack a clear vision of how the compact 2021 scenario will be accomplished. The policies indicate that the GVRD will enter into various partnerships, and that the process of reaching their growth management goals will be driven by a consensus based approach. Because the implementation of the LRSP is ambiguous, and because the GVRD itself recognizes the need to explore innovative policies to help them manage the region’s growth, it is
clear that new policy tools are needed in order for the GVRD to create a compact metropolitan focus area and to protect Green Zone designated land uses. Thus, an examination of the current status of growth management in the Lower Mainland suggests that a separate and distinct UGB policy that strictly focuses on containing urban growth within contiguous boundaries, which are presently nonexistent, is an option to consider for the GVRD to meet its stated growth management objectives.

This chapter noted that the GVRD’s growth management initiatives are both well intentioned and ambitious. The implementation of the LRSP appears incoherent; there lacks an overall “binding” policy designed to guide the implementation of the strategy. Because the objectives of both the LRSP and general UGB policies are almost identical, it seems evident that the application of UGBs in the region could serve as that overall binding implementation policy for the LRSP. By implementing UGBs in the region, the objectives of the LRSP could be better realized. This is so largely because contiguous boundaries would contain urban growth to the critical areas, thus helping RTCs achieve greater densities, which would then make creating a compact metropolitan focus area and expanding transit services more feasible. Further, by implementing UGBs in the region, a contiguous barrier to urban growth would especially complement Green Zone initiatives to the extent that those areas would experience considerably less pressure from urban development. Finally, it should be noted that the application of UGBs in the region for the aforementioned purpose does not preclude the GVRD from continuing the

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33 As already noted, the policies themselves indicate a need to explore new planning tools to better achieve the goals and objectives associated with those policies (GVRD, 1993b; GVRD, 1993c; GVRD, 1995; GVRD, 1996).
various partnerships mandated by the *Growth Strategies Act*, or from implementing such policies within a consensus based process.\textsuperscript{34}

\textsuperscript{34} UGBs are often viewed as being an instrument of policy developed in somewhat semi-autocratic ways. Indeed, as the case studies will indicate, UGBs very much require a consensus based approach for them to be effective.
CHAPTER 4 - CASE STUDY OF THURSTON COUNTY’S UGB POLICIES

1. Introduction

The purpose of this chapter, as well as that of Chapter 5, is to put the urban containment policies of the GVRD and the province in comparative perspective to determine how growth management in the Lower Mainland can be made to be more robust and enforceable. In this chapter, a case study of Thurston County, Washington’s experience with designing and implementing UGB policy is presented. Examining and evaluating the policies of this jurisdiction, will delineate two important considerations regarding UGB policy: (1) UGB policy design; and (2) supportive regulatory frameworks within which UGB policies are created and implemented. The knowledge gained from this discussion would be a crucial element in the consideration of UGBs in the Lower Mainland because up to this point, discussion of UGBs has been theoretical and somewhat abstract in regards to what their application in the Lower Mainland truly means to, and requires of, local and provincial governments. This case study narrows this thesis’ focus on UGBs from a general discussion to a specific examination of a jurisdiction’s experiences with formulating and implementing such policies.

As will be discussed later, Thurston County’s growth management, and especially their UGB, policies predated the Washington State Growth Management Act 1990, which indicates that such policies were voluntarily initiated by the county’s three most urbanized municipalities. This is important in that it will show that strict growth management policies can be created in a consensus-based approach to policy formulation, a process to which the GVRD and the province of B.C. have demonstrated a commitment. The rationale for choosing Thurston County Washington as a case study is twofold. First, Thurston County is geographically and
economically similar, and indeed is in close proximity, to many Fraser Valley communities. Thurston County is currently struggling with issues of urban development at or near urban fringe areas, and its municipalities are set within a rural backdrop. Furthermore, Thurston County’s relationship to the larger metropolitan areas of Tacoma and Seattle is similar to the Fraser Valley’s relationship to Greater Vancouver in the sense that it is a region experiencing the spillover growth from the nearby metropolitan area. Understanding how this County is accommodating growth may help to identify ways in which the Fraser Valley municipalities can sustainably absorb their share of the region’s growth. The other reason for examining Thurston County’s policies and experiences includes the fact that such policies were implemented in the context of extremely high growth rates, which further likens the County’s experiences with those of the Lower Mainland. Thurston County experienced 60% growth in the 1970s, nearly 30% in the 1980s, and is expected to grow 33% in the 1990s and 20% in the first decade after 2000. Population is expected to increase from 161,000 in 1990 to over 260,000 in 2010 under a slow growth scenario, adding nearly 100,000 new people in the two decade period (TRPC, 1996b, 1).

This chapter will begin by providing some background surrounding Thurston County. Following this discussion, a detailed examination of the *Washington State Growth Management Act 1990* will be provided, which sets the statewide planning framework with which the policies of Thurston County must be consistent. Attention will then shift to the policies of Thurston County, and specifically those of Tumwater, Lacey and Olympia, which focus on managing growth through the application of UGBs. Finally, a limited evaluation of the County’s experiences with such policies will be provided. Rather than engaging in a quantitative analysis of
these policies, this section will explore qualitative indicators of the policy's success or failure, which will largely consist of examining the consistency of County and municipal capital expenditures with the UGB land use plan, and examining local zoning to determine whether there is a commitment to UGB policies.

2. **Background**

2.1. **Definition of Study Area**

This case study focuses on Thurston County Washington, and specifically on the three urbanized areas in the County, which include Tumwater, Olympia, and Lacey. Figure 4-1 illustrates both the geographic context of Thurston County in relation to the rest of Washington State, as well as Tumwater, Olympia and Lacey's context within Thurston County. While this case study examines the UGB policies of Thurston County, particular reference will be made to the three aforementioned cities. Reasons for doing this primarily include their level of urbanization and their high growth rates relative to the rest of the county. Furthermore, focus on these three cities is based on the fact that Olympia, Tumwater, and Lacey have, in cooperation with the Thurston County Regional Planning Council, engaged in cooperative efforts at managing growth before they were mandated to do so under Washington’s *Growth Management Act 1990.*

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35 The policies are far too recent to engage in a methodologically sound quantitative analysis. As well, the purpose of this case study is not to prove or disprove the policies' efficacy, but rather to simply draw from the experiences of Thurston County so that meaningful conclusions can be made with respect to managing growth in the Lower Mainland.
2.2. Thurston County's General Character

As was illustrated on the above maps, Thurston County is located in the southern part of western Washington at the southern tip of Puget Sound. It is the 32nd largest county in Washington State, encompassing a total land mass of 737 square miles (Thurston Regional
Planning Council, 1996, I-5). The three cities of Olympia, Tumwater, and Lacey, located in the northern most part of the county, are the most urbanized parts of the county. The general character of the county is rural largely because, as of 1996, some 93 per cent of the county’s total land area remained unincorporated (TRPC, 1996, I-5). Thus, the more urbanized parts of the county, including the three main cities mentioned above, exist in some form of a rural context. In this sense, Thurston County very much resembles Fraser Valley communities in the Lower Mainland.

2.3. Overview of Growth Trends Relevant to Growth Management

An examination of Thurston County’s growth trends and patterns will reveal that, overall, the county is experiencing fairly high rates of growth. Of all the growth pressures confronting this county, population growth seems to be the most important. Population in Thurston County has steadily increased since the 1950s at an average rate of approximately 4.5% per year, making the County among the fastest growing in Washington State (TRPC, 1996a, II-17).\(^{36}\) Moreover, this rapid population growth is expected to continue until at least the year 2020. In terms of housing, it is evident that, until the present, housing starts have largely been in the form of single family detached housing, which characterizes much of the county. The result of this is low residential densities, even in the most urbanized parts of the county.

\(^{36}\) In terms of average annual rates of change, Thurston County has been growing faster than the larger Pierce and King Counties. In this respect, Thurston County has consistently been among the top three growing counties in Washington since the 1950s (TRPC, 1996a, II-17).
Employment has also been steadily increasing in the county, with the single most important and largest sector being government. Finally, an examination of journey to work statistics suggests that there are no significant imbalances in terms of jobs and housing within the county. In other words, people largely live in close proximity to where they work. These trends form the basis behind the assumptions inherent in the county’s growth management strategy, which includes the application of UGBs. The following sections discuss legislated urban containment policies as set forth in the *Washington Growth Management Act 1990 (Revised 1996)*, as well as the UGB policies of Thurston County.

37 In 1990, 80% of people lived close to where they work (TRPC, 1996).

In order to ensure that growth is guided by "sustainable development", the state legislature passed the *Washington State Growth Management Act 1990* (herein referred to as either the "GMA" or the "Act"), which was recently revised in 1996. The significance of this Act is that it requires certain communities to establish plans to manage their growth in accordance with a number of statewide goals and objectives pertaining to urban development. In terms of its specific significance to Thurston County's growth management initiatives, it sets the regulatory, policy and legal frameworks within which the county must create and implement their growth management policies, which include UGB policies. For this reason, a careful examination of the GMA is important in understanding substate growth management planning, such as that of Thurston County.

### 3.1. Intent and Statewide Planning Goals

The state legislature enacted the GMA mainly because of mounting evidence that growth in the state was increasingly resulting in sprawling subdivisions, which made very inefficient use of land. In this regard, the legislature found that uncoordinated and unplanned growth, together with a lack of common goals expressing the public's interest in the conservation and the wise use of our lands, pose a threat to the environment, sustainable economic development, and the health, safety, and high quality of life enjoyed by residents of this state (RCW 36.70A.010).

The main intent of the Act is to assure that growth and development policies among various levels of governmental jurisdictions are coordinated, so as to ensure more sustainable patterns of urban development. In order for this to happen, the Act outlines thirteen statewide planning goals relating to growth management. The purpose of these goals is to guide growth management
planning at all substate levels by providing a set of common objectives to which all local plans and regulations must work toward achieving. The thirteen statewide planning goals for Washington State include:

(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 growth in areas experiencing 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 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.

(13) **Historic preservation.** Identify and encourage the preservation of lands, sites, and structures, that have historical or archaeological significance (RCW 36.70A.020).

These statewide planning goals are the foundation of all growth management planning initiatives in the state of Washington, whether they be state, regionally, or locally sponsored. While many such planning goals have been dismissed in the past as lofty ideals -- “motherhood statements” -- the ones presented above have the force of law behind them, and so their adherence
by all planning agencies in the state is required. Indeed, the public participation goal has led to the creation of “watchdog” organizations, such as the 1000 Friends of Washington, that make sure each of the above goals are being met by various planning authorities, and that, when necessary, initiate legal actions against noncompliant jurisdictions (Steve Claggett, 1997, pers. comm.). The point is clear; these statewide planning goals are ambitious on the one hand, yet on the other hand they are enforceable because of their binding legal status.

3.2. Who is Required to Plan Under this Act

In recognition of the fact that not every jurisdiction in the state of Washington is experiencing high growth rates, the GMA does not require that all planning jurisdictions prepare comprehensive growth management plans. Rather, the GMA requires only those jurisdictions faced with high rates of growth to prepare growth management plans pursuant to the provisions of this Act. Specifically, the Act requires counties with a population of 50,000 or greater, and a population increase of 10% or more in the last decade (or any county with at least 20% growth over the last decade) to prepare comprehensive plans and development regulations which address extensive new issues relating to growth management, and the establishment of UGBs.\(^{38}\)

Once a county or other jurisdiction meets the above criteria\(^ {39}\), it must take actions which operationalize the statewide planning goals set forth in the preceding section (RCW 36.70A.040 (3)). First, the affected county or legislative authority must establish county-wide planning policies. Second, the affected county or city located within the county must identify and

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\(^{38}\) Counties and other jurisdictions that once met these criteria, and that have therefore begun the preparation of the relevant policies, must continue with the implementation of those policies even though they may no longer meet the applicable set of criteria.

\(^{39}\) Whether it be voluntary or mandated to do so, jurisdictions not meeting the criteria may voluntarily choose to abide by the provisions of the Act.
designate ecologically sensitive and renewable resource based lands, and thereafter adopt
development regulations which conserve and protect these lands. Third, the county must
designate urban growth areas, and hence UGBs, within which future urban development is to
occur. These actions stipulated by the Act are the most significant with respect to the successful
implementation of the Act, and so are elaborated upon below.

3.3. Mandatory Elements to be Included in Comprehensive Plans

The purpose for outlining the content of comprehensive plans in the Act is to ensure that
all planning jurisdictions are planning for a common set of “elements”, and also to ensure that
individual comprehensive plans are both internally consistent and coordinated with other planning
jurisdictions. The basic form of the comprehensive plan remains unchanged under this Act. It
still consists of maps and “descriptive text covering objectives, principles, and standards used to
develop the comprehensive plan” (RCW 36.70A.070). The Act, however, stipulates exactly what
elements must be covered by comprehensive plans of both counties and cities. These elements are
presented below.

Land use - Perhaps the most important element included in comprehensive plans under this Act is
the land use element, as this element is tightly interconnected to all the other elements of the plan.
The land use element ought to convey the proposed distribution, general location, and extent of
the “uses of land, where appropriate, for agriculture, timber production, housing, commerce,
industry, recreation, open spaces”. The land use element is also required to indicate population
densities, and to designate lands and water that will be protected by regulations (RCW
36.70A.070 (1)).
Housing - Closely linked to the land use element is the required inclusion of a housing element in comprehensive plans. This element must include an inventory of current stock, and must also project future housing needs. Moreover, it must establish housing policies that indicate how future housing needs will be met in an efficient manner. Furthermore, it should state how adequate housing is to be made accessible to the “needs of all economic segments of the community”, which is especially important when a jurisdiction considers UGB policies that often impact housing prices (RCW 36.70A.070 (2)).

Capital Facilities - Comprehensive plans must also include a capital facilities plan which not only inventories the current stock of capital facilities, but which must also predict future needs and plan accordingly, as well as be consistent with the land use element of the comprehensive plan (RCW 36.70A.070 (3)). As will become apparent, this internal consistency requirement is an important means of guiding growth to critical areas, and so is an important aspect to localized UGB policies, such as those of Thurston County.

Utilities - This element is to show where existing and proposed utilities are to be located, including electrical lines, telecommunication lines, and natural gas lines (RCW 36.70A.070 (4)).

Rural - All comprehensive plans must clearly delineate and protect rural lands that are neither areas designated for urban growth, nor protected renewable resource areas (RCW 36.70A.070

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40 See Chapters 2 and 5 for discussions regarding the effects UGB policies have on housing prices, mix and form.
The intent behind these designations is to preserve the “rural character” of many of Washington’s communities, such as Thurston County.

Transportation - The GMA clearly states that there must be consistency between the land use and transportation elements of the comprehensive plan, reflecting an understanding of the land use - transportation planning link that is so often misunderstood by planning authorities. Specifically, the transportation element requires comprehensive plans to include a basic transportation plan that addresses level of service as well as demand management strategies (RCW 36.70A.070 (6) (i)-(iii)).

Overall, the requirement that comprehensive plans include the above elements, as well as that they be internally consistent and interjurisdictionally coordinated, is the primary means by which the Act attempts to ensure local implementation of statewide planning goals. Ensuring that those goals are implemented by counties and legislative authorities required to plan under this Act, however, also requires the inclusion of a strictly growth management oriented element in comprehensive plans. For this reason, the GMA requires that such authorities include in their comprehensive plans a strategy for containing growth within well defined boundaries.

3.4. Comprehensive Plans and the Designation of Urban Growth Areas

As alluded to above, this is the most important part of the GMA in terms of having Washington State’s statewide planning goals implemented at the local level. Moreover, this part of the Act is extremely critical to growth management considerations at county and other local levels in the sense that the Act expressly states what policy tools are to be utilized in managing urban growth. In this regard, the Act very clearly requires the establishment of urban growth
areas - areas designed to accommodate future growth - and hence also UGBs which define those areas.

Because of the importance of this section of the GMA to both growth management in the State of Washington and to the content of this thesis, the section is quoted extensively below.

The Act stipulates, with respect to urban growth areas, that:

1. Each county that is required or chooses to plan under RCW 36.70A.040 [discussed earlier] 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. Each city that is located in such a county shall be included within an urban growth area. An urban growth area may include more than a single city. An urban growth area may include territory that is located outside of a city only if such territory already is characterized by urban growth whether or not the urban growth area includes a city, or is adjacent to territory already characterized by urban growth, or is a designated new fully contained community as defined by RCW 36.70A.350.

2. Based upon the growth management population made for the county by the office of financial management, the urban growth areas in the county shall include areas and densities sufficient to permit the urban growth that is projected to occur in the county for the succeeding twenty-year period. Each urban growth area shall permit urban densities and shall include greenbelt and open space areas. An urban growth area determination may include a reasonable land market supply factor and shall permit a range of urban densities and uses. In determining this market factor, cities and counties may consider local circumstances...

3. Urban Growth should be located first in areas already characterized by urban growth that have adequate existing public facility and service capacities to serve such development, second in areas already characterized by urban growth that will be served adequately by a combination of both existing public facilities and services and any additional needed public facilities and services that are provided by either public or private sources, and third in the remaining portions of the urban growth areas.

4. ...it is not appropriate that urban governmental services be extended to or expanded in rural areas except in those limited circumstances shown to be necessary to protect basic public health and safety and the environment and when such services are financially supportable at rural densities and do not permit urban development (RCW 36.70A.110).

The creation of these urban growth areas and the application of UGBs, as required by this policy, is substantively consistent with the literature presented in Chapter 2 of this thesis. In this context, points to note from the above policy include: the strict delineation of urban and nonurban lands; where urban development may and may not occur; the need to include a land market factor into the designation of the urban growth area so as to not adversely affect urban land values; the
phasing of growth within the urban growth area in outwardly expanding concentric rings so as to make efficient use of existing municipal services; the use of municipal services to limit the rate of expansion within the urban growth area; and finally, the need to incorporate urban growth area policies within comprehensive plans to ensure interjurisdictional coordination of policies and land use regulations.

As to the inviolability of the UGBs created by the policy, the Act also seeks to ensure that leapfrog development, or any other urban-like development beyond the lines, is not permitted. The Act accomplishes this by forbidding any city or town from annexing territory beyond the UGBs which delineate the city’s or town’s urban growth area (RCW 35.13.005). In effect, by not allowing cities or towns to annex unincorporated territory outside of their respective urban growth areas, the Act prevents them from allowing sprawling or leapfrog development beyond the areas for which they have jurisdiction. Finally, with respect to urban growth area (UGB) policies, the Act requires a review of such policies and their respective density targets at least every ten years (RCW 36.70A.130), and also that development regulations, capital budgets and 6-year street and road programs become consistent with the urban growth area component of comprehensive plans within one year of that comprehensive plan’s adoption (RCW 36.70A.120).

### 3.5. County-Wide Planning Policy Requirements

The requirement that counties prepare and adopt county-wide policies consistent with statewide planning goals is another means of ensuring that the statewide planning goals are

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41 There is a common exception to many of the above policies, and that exception is in regards to the creation of new “fully contained communities”. Such communities, which are basically a sustainable development planning ideal, are allowed in areas not earmarked for urban growth only if they meet the criteria set forth in RCW 36.70A.350 of the GMA.

42 Counties are deemed to be regional governments by the GMA.
implemented at the local level. In general, the county-wide policies serve as a policy framework for both subsequent county planning policies and local implementing ordinances to better ensure intergovernmental coordination of policies. County-wide policies are formulated through a collaborative process, involving the county and all of the local legislative authorities comprising the county. Any disputes among the parties to the creation of these policies are resolved through facilitated negotiation, and, if necessary, through mediation and perhaps binding arbitration. Failure to reach agreement may result in the imposition of sanctions by the Governor of the state. Because county-wide policies guide future local planning, they are a very important aspect of this Act. Perhaps the overriding theme is that of the multijurisdictional coordination of policies designed to guarantee that local authorities, as well as state agencies, work together toward the achievement of the GMA’s statewide growth management goals and objectives. County-wide policy requirements are therefore similar in intent to the regional context statement requirements of the British Columbia *Growth Strategies Act*. The main difference is that county-wide policies require local authorities to go beyond simply considering the regional perspective in their comprehensive plans. Rather, as mentioned above, they form the planning framework within which local authorities must operate.

Specifically, the county-wide policies required under this Act must address a number of growth related matters. At a minimum, the Act requires county-wide policies to address: implementation strategies for creating urban growth areas; “the promotion of contiguous and orderly development and provision of urban services to such development”; the placement of capital facilities; regional transportation; the demand for housing for all segments of the population; intergovernmental planning in urban growth areas; economic development and
employment, and an analysis of the fiscal impact of these policies (RCW 36.70A.210). Finally, with respect to county-wide planning policies, the Act clearly states that failure to comply with the content and procedures of this section in the Act will result in the imposition of sanctions upon the offending city or county. Therefore, as we see again in this Act, some fairly ambitious policy requirements are given legislative backing in order to ensure they are implemented in ways that are consistent with statewide goals.

3.6. Noncompliance and the Application of Sanctions

If a growth management hearing board, or any other mandated agency of the state, declares a city or county to be noncompliant with the substantive content of the GMA, the Act gives the Governor the mandate to impose sanctions on the offending city or county. The specific circumstances under which sanctions may be imposed include: when a county or city fails to designate critical areas and renewable resource lands pursuant to RCW 36.70A.170; when a city or county fails to adopt development regulations that protect critical areas and renewable resource lands in accordance with RCW 36.70A.060; when a county fails to designate urban growth areas under RCW 36.70A.110; and when a city or county fails to adopt its comprehensive plan, which includes provisions for the creation and maintenance of the urban growth area (RCW 36.70A.345).

What form the sanctions take on the offending city or county is determined by the Governor. The Governor may either instruct the Office of Financial Management to reduce appropriation levels to the offending city or county; or order the state treasurer to withhold the portion of the revenues to which the city or county had been entitled under the any of the

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43 The act provides for opportunities for individuals or organizations with "standing" to challenge policies required under this act in front of growth management hearing boards (see RCW 36.70A.280 and 290).
following: the motor vehicle fuel tax; the transportation improvement account; the urban arterial trust account; the rural arterial trust account; the liquor profit tax; and the liquor excise tax (RCW 36.70A.340). The state’s ability to impose these sanctions is very important in the successful implementation of its statewide growth management planning goals, as the ideals associated with many of the policies in the GMA would not be considered attainable, and thus never worked toward, without the presence of a legislative bite that could potentially financially cripple a noncompliant local government.

3.7. Overall Significance of the Washington Growth Management Act 1990

The GMA is a vital key to the growth management efforts of all the jurisdictions attempting to manage their growth in the state of Washington. It sets the regulatory and policy framework for all levels of government concerned with formulating and implementing growth management planning policies. It requires an extremely high degree of interjurisdictional coordination of policies, so that broader goals and objectives are not thwarted at local levels. It identifies several matters all local governments must address in the preparation of their comprehensive plans. It clearly ascertains that the way in which growth will be managed in the state will be to contain it within well defined, legislated, nonarbitrarily determined, UGBs, beyond which urban development is forbidden.\(^{44}\) It ensures planning at the substate level is coordinated through county-wide policies, which themselves must be consistent with statewide policies. Finally, it allows for punitive actions to be taken against noncompliant jurisdictions that fail to implement the policies required by the GMA. Planning therefore proceeds from a set of premises

\(^{44}\) With only minimal exceptions, as outlined earlier in the chapter.
and assumptions made by the state regarding sustainable urban development patterns and patterns of sustainable urban form. In other words, the passage of the GMA has transformed the planning system in Washington into a hierarchical system dominated by state directives, and within which roles are clearly defined. In this system, the state is the policy maker, and the local jurisdictions are the state’s policy implementers.

There are three primary differences between the British Columbia Growth Strategies Act and the GMA worthy of note at this time. First, the Growth Strategies Act does little to ensure that urban containment is a consideration in the formulation of growth strategies, whereas its Washington State counterpart mandates regional and local governments to establish urban growth areas defined by UGBs. Second, because the planning goals of the Washington State GMA are statewide, and because the Act requires all local authorities to plan in accordance with those goals, a higher degree of interjurisdictional coordination is ensured. Recall that one of the problems with the British Columbia Growth Strategies Act is that there are only weak provisions ensuring local plans and policies from different regional districts are coordinated. Finally, it is crucial to point out that the Growth Strategies Act contains no enforcement provisions, whereas the Washington State GMA is heavily reliant upon sanctions, or at least the threat thereof, to compel local jurisdictions to comply with the Act and its statewide planning goals.

As stated earlier in this chapter, this Act has significant impacts on how substate jurisdictions such as Thurston County manage their growth. Indeed that is the primary intent of the Act. The following section will discuss the most recent growth management policies of Thurston County in an effort to illustrate how the GMA is translated into policy at a local level. In terms of the focus of this thesis, however, particular attention will be placed on Thurston
County's policies regarding their urban growth areas. By focusing on this aspect of Thurston County's growth management program, the design considerations associated with their UGB policies will hopefully become more salient, and also be consistent with findings outlined in Chapter 2 of this thesis. Nevertheless, it is important to note that understanding the growth management policies of local jurisdictions such as Thurston County would be impossible without first understanding the statewide policy framework within which such policies were created and implemented, and indeed required.

4. Thurston County's UGB Policies

4.1. Urban Growth Boundary Policy Prior to the 1990 GMA

Thurston County's growth pressures were at their peak throughout the 1970's. During this time, Thurston County faced uncertainty regarding a number of matters related to that growth, including service provision, land use planning and coordination in the area, and annexation (Easley, 1992, 22). In response to this uncertainty and high rates of growth, Thurston County examined two ways of meeting the challenges with which it was being confronted. The first included developing intergovernmental review procedures to better enable local governments to coordinate their land use and service provision policies. The other way included the establishment of an urban growth area, as defined by UGBs, in order to better guide growth to areas in which service provision would be economically efficient. Therefore, the establishment of UGBs in Thurston County in the 1970's was not so much an effort at containing urban growth, as it was a means of achieving more efficient service provision for its rapidly growing urban areas (TRPC, 1996, VII-16-17).
The most urbanized and densely developed cities of Lacey, Tumwater, and Olympia established an urban service boundary in the late 1970's, and reached an understanding among themselves and with the Thurston County Regional Planning Council regarding the provision of municipal services. The primary purpose of this urban service boundary was to establish an area within which urban growth would occur, where intensive public services could be provided, and where annexation would take place (Easley, 1992, 22).

In 1981, the Thurston Regional Planning Council formulated a formal growth strategy in cooperation with the three cities mentioned above. This growth strategy was guided by three overriding principals:

1. Concentrate urban development within planned urban areas;
2. Provide high-quality basic services at the least cost;
3. Encourage orderly development that is consistent with adequate and efficient provision of public facilities and that does not burden the community as a whole (Easley, 1992, 23).

While the 1981 strategy primarily focused on the efficient provision of municipal services, it was also forward looking in that it recognized the need to contain urban growth in the future for reasons beyond cost-effective municipal servicing. The Thurston Regional Planning Council imposed a UGB surrounding the LOTT cities which established the outer limit of urban expansion, city annexations, and servicing extensions, and defined an area which would be cooperatively planned by the LOTT cities (Easley, 1992, 22). The fundamental purpose of the boundary was to delineate, for a fifteen to a twenty-year period, which areas would develop to urban densities from areas that would be preserved as renewable resource lands. A 1983 Memorandum of Understanding among the LOTT cities reiterated the ideals described above, and established a rudimentary enforcement/implementation mechanism to ensure the boundary’s

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45 The parties to this arrangement - Lacey, Olympia, Tumwater and the Thurston Regional Planning Council, are often referred to as “LOTT” or the LOTT cities.
integrity was preserved. This included a mutual agreement among the LOTT cities to forbid any municipal utility or other service extensions beyond the boundary, except to "correct existing sewage treatment problems or to address public health and safety problems" (Easley, 1992, 23; TRPC, 1996, VII-17). Thus, by disallowing service extensions beyond the UGB, the LOTT cities hoped that growth would concentrate in the urban growth area.

Figure 4-3 Thurston County's Urban Growth Areas
In 1986, a study evaluating the effectiveness of the UGBs found that 60% of new housing starts occurring within the UGB were beyond the urban service boundary, indicating a sort of sprawl within the lines. Further, the study showed that densities in the urban service area were lower than planned - 3.5 du/a instead of approximately 8 du/a. In response to these concerns, the LOTT cities redrafted their memorandum of understanding in a manner that made land use decisions and the formulation of planning policies much more integrated. Specifically, the new agreement set forth a number of goals the jurisdictions intended to work toward. These goals included:

1. Concentrate urban development within planned urban areas, contingent on the availability of municipal utilities;
2. Provide high-quality public services at the least cost;
3. Encourage urban growth within a city’s limits, phasing outward from the urban core;
4. Maintain and protect significant natural resource agricultural, and environmentally sensitive areas; and
5. Protect groundwater quality (TRPC, 1988).

This agreement is significantly, yet subtly, different from the previous arrangement among the LOTT cities. This agreement establishes a phased UGB system wherein the initial phase establishes a growth area designed to absorb the area’s growth for a ten-year period. Within this area, concentrated growth is encouraged to be gradually phased outward from the urban core, as opposed to allowing growth to sprawl within the area. The area within the UGB surrounding the initial phase is the long-term urban growth area, which is supposed to provide for urban growth over the 11-25-year time period (Easley, 1992, 23). Moreover, the LOTT cities determined that development in this area shall be consistent with a long-term vision of the area’s growth, and must not occur in ways that would impede urban densities in the future. Implementation and enforcement of this two-level UGB system, however, remained the provision (or lack thereof) of
utilities and services that would guide growth to be consistent with the goals of the UGB policies (TRPC, 1988).

How effective this new arrangement has been has yet to be definitively studied, either by the TRPC, or by academia. This is primarily so because just two years after its implementation, the 1990 GMA was introduced, which stalled the TRPC’s efforts at evaluating their 1988 policies. Nevertheless, despite the lack of quantitative studies evaluating the efficacy of the 1988 agreement, the LOTT cities maintain that the agreement was effective at containing urban growth and preserving renewable resource lands. Specifically, the TRPC states that demand for subdivisions outside of the UGBs has all but disappeared, largely because of downzonings in the rural areas that establish lot sizes far too large for uses other than agricultural (i.e., 20 acre minimum lot sizes) (Easley, 1992, 24; Lynn Dosheery, pers. comm.). Finally, only four sewer extensions have been approved beyond the short-term UGB, and “these were for vested properties which, with sewer, would develop at densities consistent with the urban growth area. There have been no extensions to date outside the long-term boundary” (Easley, 1992, 24; Lynn Dosheery, pers. comm.). It is clear, therefore, that the 1988 agreement represents a progression from earlier, perhaps less effective, UGB policies, as well as a seemingly practical way to contain urban growth and to protect renewable resource lands.

4.2. Thurston County’s UGB Policies Under the Washington Growth Management Act

As was noted in the previous section, the introduction of the Washington State Growth Management Act 1990 affected the growth management initiatives of Thurston County in a

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46 Staff focus had to be switched to matters pertaining to the county meeting the requirements of the new Act.
number of ways. It should be noted however, that the Act’s introduction in no way made
Thurston County’s policies any less effective. To the contrary, the Act provides a legislative and
legal stature to those policies, making them more enforceable, and thus more effective (TRPC,
1996b, 1-4). Moreover, the somewhat innovative aspect to the LOTT arrangement, which
included voluntary joint planning, is carried forward under the GMA. Recall that the GMA
requires the creation of a comprehensive plan pursuant to a number of criteria as set forth in the
Act, as well as the establishment of county-wide planning policies which are consistent with
statewide planning goals. The sections below examine the policies Thurston County has
established in response to this requirement of the GMA, especially as they apply to the creation
and implementation of UGBs.

4.2.1. Thurston County’s County-Wide Policies

County-wide policies, as stipulated in the GMA, provide a framework for the coordination
of comprehensive plans and all other planning policies relating to urban growth among all substate
jurisdictions within a county. In the case of Thurston County, they are used to “frame how the
comprehensive plans of Thurston County and the seven cities and towns will be developed and
coordinated” (TRPC, 1993). The county-wide policies are developed by the county in
cooperation with its member jurisdictions. These polices are particularly important in terms of
assuring the designation and maintenance of UGBs and urban growth areas. As well, it is
important at this point to note that the GMA equates county governments with regional districts.
This is important in that these county-wide policies represent a regional growth strategy, not
unlike the LRSP in Greater Vancouver. The obvious difference is the much broader scope of the
LRSP, compared to Thurston County’s county-wide policies discussed below. As well, it should
be clear that Thurston County’s county-wide policies are much more focused on legislated urban containment through the use of UGBs, whereas, to the extent that urban containment is considered in the Lower Mainland, the Green Zone policies of the GVRD are preservationist and so establish a series of urban limit lines.

At this point it should be strongly emphasized that the county-wide policies reaffirm the original 1988 LOTT arrangement, which established a two-tier UGB system (TRPC, 1993, 1; also see Figure 5-3). The county-wide policies also expand the extent to which UGBs are applied in the county, to include all seven cities and towns within the county’s jurisdiction.47

Specifically, Thurston County’s county-wide policies prohibit local jurisdictions from allowing urban growth in any areas not included in an urban growth area (TRPC, 1993, 1.1). Obviously, in order for this to be implemented, urban growth areas must be designated. The county-wide policies also determine how such areas are designated by establishing a series of criteria UGBs are required to meet. UGBs in Thurston County, therefore, must:

1. Contain areas characterized by urban growth,
2. [Be] served by or are planned to be served by municipal utilities,
3. Contain vacant land near existing urban areas that is capable of supporting urban development,
4. [Be] compatible with the use of designated resource lands and critical areas,
5. Follow logical boundaries,
6. Consider citizen preferences, and
7. [Be] of sufficient area and densities to permit the urban growth that is projected to occur in the succeeding twenty-year period (TRPC, 1993, 1.1).

Furthermore, the process through which these UGBs are created involves early and ongoing consultation within county member jurisdictions, among member jurisdictions and the TRPC, and with the public. Disagreements over the designation of growth boundaries are mediated by

47 Until the county-wide policies were formulated, UGBs in Thurston County only surrounded the LOTT cities.
appropriate state agencies. Once implemented, the boundaries are reviewed at least every ten-years based on updated 20-year population projections.

County-wide policies also include provisions for ensuring that urban densities are maintained within UGBs. Specifically, the section of the policy entitled “Promotion of Contiguous and Orderly Development & Provision of Urban Services” attempts to create a framework to accommodate much of the county’s growth in population and employment within UGBs; and in ways that promote: livability, the preservation of environmental quality, the retention of open space, the maintenance of an affordable housing market, the efficient provision of municipal services, and finally the “orderly transition of land from county to city” (TRPC, 1993, 2). Development will hence be concentrated in growth areas by:

1. Encouraging infilling in areas already characterized by urban growth that have the capacity to provide public services and facilities to serve urban development;
2. Phasing urban development and facilities outward from core areas;
3. Establishing mechanisms to ensure average residential densities sufficient to enable the county as a whole to accommodate its 20-year population projection;
4. Designate rural areas for low intensity, non-urban uses that preserve natural resource lands, protect rural areas from sprawling, low density development and assure that rural areas may be served with lower cost, non-urban public services and utilities;
5. Where urban services & utilities are not yet available, requiring development to be configured so urban growth areas may eventually infill and become urban;

Moreover, to ensure development is contiguous within the lines, the policies require coordinated planning and implementation of such things as urban land uses, parks, open spaces, transportation, and municipal servicing. To discourage development beyond the boundaries, the county-wide policies forbid extensions of urban services and facilities, such as sewer and water, beyond UGBs, except to serve existing rural development or to address public health or water quality problems. By disallowing servicing extensions beyond the UGB, pressures for leapfrog and exurban development are also alleviated.
As already alluded to, an innovative aspect of Thurston County's UGB program is the joint regional/municipal planning of the urban growth areas. The county-wide policies reflect this aspect of Thurston County's UGB program. The rationale for doing this is to achieve consensus regarding the placement and purpose of the boundaries so that there is "buy-in" regarding the planning of the urban growth areas (Lynn Dosheery, 1997, pers. comm.). This means that, in many cases, zoning ordinances designed to implement the UGB and maintain the urban growth areas are jointly adopted by individual municipalities (TRPC, 1993, 3.2). Further, agreements have been reached by member jurisdictions and the council, in respect of joint plans or zoning ordinances, to honor the plan or zoning for a "mutually agreeable period following adoption of the plan or annexation" (TRPC, 1993, 3.3). This aspect of the county-wide policies is relevant to the success of UGBs in that joint planning represents the highest degree of intergovernmental coordination of policies, which has been argued throughout this thesis as being a vital key to the success of any UGB program. These policies attempt to get all jurisdictions to buy into the overall program, thus eliminating the likelihood of one member thwarting the county's efforts, and so too the integrity of the overall UGB policy for the region.

Overall, Thurston County's County-Wide Planning Policies establish a framework within which the county's UGBs are established pursuant to the GMA. The policies lay a foundation that makes the success of the UGBs a very real possibility. This is largely due to the number of policies that focus on the implementation of the UGBs, as well as those policies which ensure that development within the boundaries is coordinated and consistent with the rationale behind the use of urban containment policies. The Thurston County county-wide policies are also robust in the
sense that they are only amenable under certain strict conditions, none of which involves urban expansion, or increases the likelihood that leapfrog development will occur.

Because the county-wide policies clearly and explicitly state why and how UGBs will be implemented, the goals and objectives associated with those policies are likely to be achieved. When one then considers that such policies have the force of law behind them once they are adopted by a county, their success, in terms of being implemented, is virtually inevitable. In short, the policies state that urban containment and the preservation of resource lands are the primary goals of the policies. The policies also state that these goals will be achieved through the creation of urban growth areas defined by UGBs. Finally, growth will be contained within the boundaries because of intergovernmental coordination and joint planning that sets forth zoning ordinances and other regulations that forbid development in any area that could potentially undermine the integrity of the UGB.

4.2.2. Renewed LOTT Agreement

The county-wide planning policies were adopted by Thurston County throughout 1992. Three years hence, on December 7, 1995, the LOTT cities renewed their 1988 agreement to include provisions mandated by the GMA. The main purpose of this agreement is to adopt and implement urban growth area zoning and development standards as set forth in the county-wide policies. This sort of agreement, while not mandated by state law, is nevertheless similar to the implementation agreements established by the Growth Strategies Act in the British Columbia context. The primary difference, of course, is that the LOTT agreement was entered into voluntarily prior to the passage of the GMA, whereas such agreements are encouraged by the Growth Strategies Act following the establishment of a growth strategy by a regional district.
Finally, whereas implementation agreements are typically between regional districts and provincial agencies, the LOTT agreement represents an inter-municipal agreement addressing trans-jurisdictional issues of concern such as growth management and the provision of municipal services.

The agreement solidifies the adoption of joint plans to guide the character of future development in urban growth areas, which is an aspect of the agreement that is unlikely to be manifested in implementation agreements established under the *Growth Strategies Act*. It also states that the county will adopt the three cities’ joint plans and incorporate them into the county’s comprehensive plan. Each city as well as the county will adopt joint development standards as a means of implementing the joint plans which apply to the urban growth areas. The LOTT cities see this joint adoption of development standards as an essential contribution to the achievement of the long term goals each city has set forth with respect to the urban growth area.

The renewed LOTT agreement demonstrates, among other things, a willingness to implement a part of the county-wide policies many officials thought would prove to be very difficult and acrimonious (Lynn Dosheery, 1997, pers. comm.). It essentially accomplishes two things, each of which is crucial to the success of the region’s UGBs. First, a solid foundation for coordinating policies regarding the manner in which future growth will be contained has been created in the county’s most urbanized areas. Second, a clear understanding of how the urban growth area will be maintained, and that it will be the only locus of urban development, is made explicit and agreed upon. Many growth management plans have very ambitious goals expressed in statements of grandeur, but many of them fail because they are never implemented. Thurston County’s UGB policies have many lofty goals, but there are clear, strict, and indeed legislated
implementation strategies that accompany them. All that is left to be seen is whether the zoning enacted in these areas is truly supportive of the overall UGB policies. In other words, will the zoning in the urban growth areas (LOTT) achieve the desired results, in view of its consistency with county and state UGB policies? In examining this question, one must remember that the statements made in growth management plans must be translated into development standards to be implemented. It appears that the municipalities of Thurston County are making that step.

5. **Indicators of Success**

One of the primary difficulties in evaluating the efficacy of Thurston County's UGB policies is that they were implemented so recently that the data required to evaluate the policies is relatively scant, and where the data does exist, it is so incomplete that a meaningful interpretation of that data would be methodologically unsound. For these reasons, there will be no attempt made in this chapter to provide a quantitative analysis of the effectiveness of the policies, such as providing figures stating how much resource land has been preserved, or how land values and housing prices have been impacted as a result of the policies. Instead, as the title of this section implies, qualitative indications of the policies' efficacy will serve as the foundation for a discussion on a qualitative evaluation of the policies.

5.1. **Consistency of Capital Investments with UGB Policies**

As it was noted in an earlier section, the 1988 agreement among the LOTT cities to cooperatively manage growth in urban growth areas resulted in stringent restrictions on sewer extensions to serve development outside service and growth boundaries. This agreement was

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48 Thurston County designated 1995 statistics relating to densities (residential, commercial, rural, and industrial) as the “base-year” statistics to which the policies effects would be compared.
reaffirmed subsequent to the passage of the 1990 GMA. Since the agreement was ratified in 1988, very few sewer extensions have been approved outside of the short-term UGB, none of which extended beyond the long-term boundary. Further, the apparent demand for subdivision approvals in lands outside the boundaries has decreased marketably (Easley, 1992, 24; Lynn Dosheery, 1997, pers. comm.; TRPC, 1996a, III-7). While this is not conclusive proof that the policies are meeting their stated objectives, it is an indication that they are positively affecting the location of urban development in ways that are consistent with the goals and objectives of the policies. By containing urban development within the service or urban growth boundaries, urban development is guided into the urban growth areas, where it can be efficiently serviced.

5.2. Willingness to Translate the Policies into Development Standards

Both the county-wide policies and the relevant sections of the GMA state that local development standards must be consistent with the substantive content of those policies. Local development standards can be deemed to be consistent with the broader policy framework, however, and yet still be ineffective tools to implement that broader policy. In other words, consistent in this context is somewhat vague, for consistent does not necessarily mean effective. For example, the Growth Management Act in Florida requires that local governments implement the UGBs associated with that act through local development standards. While the local jurisdictions enacted ordinances consistent with the establishment of UGBs in their areas, they failed to ensure that local development standards were truly supportive of the broader policy to contain urban growth (Gale, 1992). As a result, the policy failed to meet its objectives. The point is that development standards must be more than consistent with the broader policy, they must be the vehicle through which that policy is implemented and maintained.
Recent passage of development standards in Thurston County shows that willingness to go beyond mere consistency in order to ensure the success of the county’s UGB policies. This is primarily reflected in the downzoning of rural areas surrounding the urban growth areas, and in the upzoning of the cores of the urban areas. In terms of the downzoning of the rural lands, the rationale in doing so was to ensure that lot sizes remain far too large for urban and exurban uses. Specifically, to ensure this, the county enacted subdivision regulations that prohibit the subdivision of rural lands surrounding urban growth areas to lot sizes smaller than 20 acres, thus discouraging urban development in these areas (TRPC, 1997a; TRPC, 1997b; TRPC, 1997c). The geographic extent of these regulations should also prevent leapfrog development. Such a standard is not required by state or county policy, yet the regional need to preserve the integrity of the UGB led to the voluntary decision, by the county and its member jurisdictions, to legislate these ordinances. These so called critical areas ordinances and rural zoning designations essentially establish rural reserves that are inviolable to urban uses. In this sense, Thurston County is establishing a *de facto* agricultural land reserve, similar to that which exists in British Columbia, and which is intended to function as a physical barrier to urban growth.⁴⁹

The willingness to go above and beyond consistency requirements is also reflected in Thurston County’s adoption of the new upzoning in the areas of Lacey, Olympia, and Tumwater. In essence, the upzoning of the urban growth areas surrounding these cities operationalizes the county’s vision for urban growth areas, as conceptualized in the county-wide policies (Fred Knostman, 1997, pers. comm.). Some of the main features of this upzoning include: the allowance of accessory dwellings (‘granny flats’) in conjunction with primary

⁴⁹ As was mentioned in Chapter 3, the Agricultural Land Reserve significantly impacted the shape of the Greater Vancouver region by, in some respects, acting as a physical barrier to urban expansion.
residences as a means of increasing residential densities; the use of density incentives to encourage
the transfer of development rights from long-term farmlands in rural areas to urban growth areas;
and most importantly, higher residential densities in urban areas, which includes, in many cases,
minimum density requirements (12.5 du/a) designed to ensure that urban densities are high
enough to both operationalize the phasing of the two-tiered UGB system, and to concentrate
urban development sufficiently so as not to create premature pressures for UGB expansion
(TRPC, 1996c; TRPC, 1996d; Lynn Dosheery, 1997, pers. comm.).

Therefore, both the passage of urban density upzoning requirements in urban growth
areas, and the downzoning of rural land surrounding urban growth areas demonstrate that there is
a willingness to operationalize the goals and objectives associated with the broader county-wide
policies into local development standards. It should be noted that in these cases, lesser effective
development standards could have been enacted, and yet remained consistent with the broader
policy frameworks. Furthermore, the decisions to adopt such development standards were indeed
controversial ones, and met with high degrees of opposition primarily from the development
community. But the jurisdictions in the county identified a regional need, and so voluntarily acted
accordingly. Consequently, this aspect of the policies’ success is very much attributed to the
strong political will of a forward looking group of council members and planning
directors/commissioners, who were dedicated to managing growth in the region through the use
of UGBs (Lynn Dosheery, 1997, pers. comm.).

50 Instituting minimum density requirements indicates the TRPC has carefully examined the shortcomings
associated with the Metro Portland UGB policies, and that corrective measures have been taken to prevent the
problem of underdensification within UGBs in this area.
51 This is confirmed by a study prepared by the 1000 Friends of Washington - a watch-dog group whose mandate is
to ensure local jurisdictions abide by the provisions of the GMA. As well, the 1000 Friends of Washington view
the efforts of Thurston County in managing urban growth as among the most impressive in the state (Steve Clagett,
1997, pers. comm.). The commitment Thurston County has shown to managing urban growth is also
broader policy objectives into development standards at local levels in Thurston County, and so by this indication, the policy is likely to succeed in helping the state and the county meet stated growth management objectives, some of which exceed the already ambitious requirements of the GMA.

Overall, in terms of assessing the effectiveness of Thurston County's county-wide policies, the lack of quantitative evidence precludes one from drawing methodologically sound conclusions. The policies are simply too recent to analyze in such a manner. The above sections attempted to provide some indications, however, that the policies are succeeding with regard to their implementation, and that they will likely be effective once fully implemented. This was accomplished by noting the existence of local commitment to the successful implementation of those policies which exceeds state requirements, as manifested in stringent municipal servicing requirements and local development standards that seem to operationalize the policies at local levels. For without that commitment, such ambitious policies would almost certainly fail. Finally, there is a demonstrated willingness to making the joint planning requirements of the county-wide policies work, as seen in the joint enactment of the aforementioned development standards subdivision and zoning regulations by member jurisdictions, and the subsequent adoption of those standards by the county (Lynn Dosheery, 1997, pers. comm.). This seems to indicate a high degree of intergovernmental policy coordination, a condition necessary for the success of any UGB policy. All things considered, therefore, the county-wide planning policies that address urban growth areas are likely to succeed in the sense that urban growth will probably be contained demonstrated in their relatively few appearances before the growth management hearing board (established by the GMA - some counties who are much less committed to managing growth have attempted to legally challenge the validity of the GMA, but have not had any success in doing so) (Steve Claggett, 1997, pers. comm.).

Joint planning is considered to be the highest degree of intergovernmental policy coordination.
within well defined boundaries, and renewable resource lands will likely be preserved under these policies.

6. Summary and Conclusions

The primary purpose of this chapter was to examine in detail the UGB policies of Thurston County, Washington in an effort to put the growth management policies of the GVRD in comparative perspective. Thurston County was chosen as a case study for the following reasons: (1) the county very much resembles Fraser Valley communities in the Lower Mainland in terms of economic, social, and spatial geography (including linkages to a nearby metropolitan area), and so learning what Thurston County has done to manage growth can be beneficial when examining how Fraser Valley communities might manage their growth; (2) the UGB policies of Thurston County demonstrate various mechanisms that ensure policy formulation and implementation is intergovernmentally coordinated; (3) the county’s UGB policies are set within a larger state-sponsored growth management program, which makes the policies both more robust and more enforceable; and (4) the UGB policies were entered into voluntarily by member jurisdictions, albeit initially to efficiently provide municipal services, and later to manage growth. For these reasons, Thurston County’s UGB policies were chosen to be a case study in this thesis.

Following a brief overview of Thurston County’s background and growth trends, the chapter began with a detailed examination of the *Washington State Growth Management Act 1990 (revised 1996)*. Here, an attempt was made to provide the state policy framework within which local policies must be formulated and implemented, and to establish the relationship between local growth management policies and statewide planning policies, goals, and objectives. Specifically, it was shown that only counties with high growth rates are required to plan under this
Act, and hence work toward achieving a number of statewide planning goals. The Act also requires a high degree of intergovernmental policy coordination to ensure the implementation of growth management policies. Perhaps the most important aspect of the Act is that it requires high growth counties to establish urban growth areas. Finally, it was demonstrated that failure to comply with the provisions of this Act may result in the imposition of sanctions on noncompliant jurisdictions by the Governor.

Having outlined the statewide growth management planning framework, Thurston County’s UGB policies were explored. Illustration was made of how the statewide planning requirements of the GMA translated into local policy and development standards. Moreover, it was shown that Thurston County implemented a variation of UGBs prior to the passage of the GMA, thus indicating a propensity for managing growth in such a manner. The need to efficiently provide municipal services in the 1970s led to an agreement among the LOTT cities to establish an urban service area wherein growth would be concentrated so that it could be efficiently serviced. This agreement became the basis of a growth management strategy in 1981, which established urban growth areas as defined by UGBs. It was reformulated in 1988 in partial response to a growing concern that density targets were not being achieved in the critical areas. The new agreement established greater interjurisdictional coordination of policies and a two-tiered UGB system based on short and long-term boundaries.

At the time the GMA took effect, the policies arising from the 1988 LOTT agreement were beginning to show some successes, including a greater degree of influence over where urban development was occurring, and a greater degree of control with respect to granting service extensions. Following the passage of the GMA, Thurston County, in accordance with the Act,
established county-wide planning policies that created a framework within which local policies must be formulated and implemented. These policies generally reaffirmed the basic tenets of the 1988 LOTT agreement, firmly established the use of UGBs in the county as a means of managing growth, and provided a process for joint planning to ensure the success of the UGB policies. In terms of evaluating the efficacy of the policies, it was noted that they are too recent to warrant a methodologically sound quantitative analysis. Rather, a brief discussion relating to the policies’ design considerations served to illustrate that their robustness and inclusiveness makes their success more likely. Specifically, because the policies are so well designed, and because local jurisdictions are demonstrating a commitment thereto, they are likely to meet the stated growth management objectives of both the county and the state.

In reviewing Thurston County’s UGB policies with the creation of similar policies in the Lower Mainland in mind, the relevant variables contributing to the apparent success of the policies in Thurston County must first be isolated. These variables include: (1) the identification of a local and regional need to voluntarily manage growth by both the county and its member jurisdictions; (2) a demonstrated local commitment to making the broader growth management policies work; (3) a state sponsored framework that gives local UGB policies the force of law, ensures interjurisdictional coordination of policies, and provides a punitive process to better ensure compliance; (4) a county or regional policy framework that reaffirms state goals and provides for a process to implement the policies (joint planning and zoning); and (5) an overall mechanism in state, county, and municipal policies that recognizes the need to include the public in the decision making process, thus giving such groups as the 1000 Friends of Washington “standing” at growth management board hearings. These are elements of the Thurston County
UGB policies that must be considered in the formulation and implementation of similar urban containment policies in the Lower Mainland.
CHAPTER 5 - CASE STUDY OF METRO PORTLAND’S UGB POLICIES

1. Introduction

This chapter focuses on the UGB policies of Oregon state, and in particular those of Metro Portland. Like the preceding chapter, the main purpose of this chapter is to contextualize the GVRD’s urban containment policies by placing them in comparative perspective. More specifically, the objectives of this chapter are to: (1) examine the UGB policies of Metro Portland; (2) discuss the statewide planning framework that dominates local planning in Oregon; (3) present the most recent policy innovations originating from Metro; and (4) evaluate the efficacy of Metro Portland’s UGB policies in meeting stated growth management objectives.

This case study was chosen for two critical reasons. One is that the UGB policies of Metro Portland are viewed as “pioneering”, and have been in use for nearly three decades, so an evaluation regarding their efficacy can be made. The other reason is that Metro Portland, unlike the previous case study, represents the application of UGB policy in a metropolitan context. Moreover, that metropolitan context very much resembles that of metropolitan Vancouver -- based on growth trends and geography -- hence making it relevant to the application of urban containment policy in the Lower Mainland.

2. Statewide Planning in Oregon

Oregon’s statewide planning program provides a framework for all local planning efforts as they apply to issues of land use and economic development. Just as the Washington State Growth Management Act 1990 mandates local jurisdictions experiencing high growth to plan in accordance with a number of statewide planning goals and objectives, so too does the Oregon
statewide planning system require local jurisdictions to comply with statewide goals and planning processes. The primary differences between the two systems is that the Oregon system predates the Washington system by two decades, and it requires all jurisdictions within the state - not just those with high growth - to comply with statewide goals and planning processes. Many people view the Oregon planning system as “pioneering” in the realm of growth management, and so its historical development deserves some attention.

2.1. Senate Bill 10

As early as 1969, the then governor of the state Tom McCall, passed Senate Bill 10 which required all local jurisdictions to formulate and adopt comprehensive land use plans and zoning regulations. The bill also outlined a series of ten vaguely worded statewide planning goals, which cities and counties were supposed to use as a framework for creating and implementing comprehensive plans and land use zoning regulations. These statewide planning goals reflected the state’s broader commitment to improving its management of the environment and resources, which was particularly well exemplified in a statewide planning goal that addressed the need to conserve farmland by disallowing its conversion to urban uses (Leonard, 1983, 6). The bill gave the governor the powers to intervene in local planning, e.g., the imposition of state-formulated comprehensive plans and zoning regulations, if statewide goals were not being met.

Despite these powers allowing state intervention in local planning, however, the success of Bill 10 was limited because it did little to alter sprawling development patterns or local decision making processes. This was so because it:

- lacked provisions for supervision and enforcement by the state;
- failed to provide funds and technical assistance to localities suddenly called upon to perform unprecedented planning tasks;
- did not establish any means to ensure that local plans were consistent with one another and to resolve conflicts between jurisdictions (Leonard, 1983, 7).
Tom McCall, who was committed to creating an effective statewide planning system, recognized the problems with *Bill 10*, and so initiated another senate bill that would establish a more cohesive statewide planning system, and also create an administrative agency to oversee the program's implementation.

2.2. Senate Bill 100 - Elements of Statewide Land Use Planning

Building on the philosophical ideals inherent in *Bill 10, Bill 100*, enacted in 1973, came to exemplify a planning system that uses sticks rather than carrots. Having learned from the weaknesses of *Bill 10*, McCall ensured that *Bill 100* would have mechanisms enabling the state to "oversee the local planning process" (Leonard, 1983, 9). A major feature of *Bill 100* includes the establishment of an administrative agency whose mandate is to ensure coordination and supervision of statewide planning standards applying to areas of "critical concern", and to "safeguard the rights of citizens to participate in the planning process" (Leonard, 1983, 9). This body came to be known as the Land Conservation and Development Commission (LCDC).

Overall, the most important elements in the Oregon statewide planning system created by *Bill 100* includes: mandatory preparation of local comprehensive plans; state review of local, regional, and state planning policies to ensure consistency; an appeals process; a comprehensive set of statewide planning goals which establish a planning framework for state and substate jurisdictions; mechanisms that ensure citizen participation in the planning process; and finally enforcement mechanisms that assure local compliance with statewide goals.
2.2.1. *Statewide Planning Goals*

The Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD; the “department”) and the LCDC were responsible for establishing statewide planning goals, which were intended to form a framework for local planning. Having learned from the experiences of *Bill 10*, the goals established by the LCDC were meant to be very clear with respect to their intent and implementation. By 1976, the department established nineteen such goals, which were given binding legal status through their adoption as administrative rules (OAR 660-15; DLCD, 1995). Together, the nineteen statewide planning goals serve as “constitutions” which guide local planning. The statewide land use and planning goals for Oregon State as adopted by the LCDC include:

1. Citizen Involvement
2. Land Use Planning Processes
3. Agricultural Lands
4. Forest Lands
5. Open Spaces, Scenic and Historic Areas, and Natural Resources
6. Air, Water, and Land Resources Quality
7. Natural Hazards and Disasters
8. Recreation
9. Economic Development
10. Housing
11. Public Facilities and Services
12. Transportation
13. Energy Conservation
14. Urbanization
15. Willamette River Greenway
16. Estuarine Resources
17. Coastal Shorelands
18. Beaches and Dunes
19. Ocean Resources

These goals reflect the state’s policies on such things as land use and transportation. Moreover, many of these goals are accompanied by guidelines or suggestions regarding how each goal
might53 be applied. For the sake of brevity, only those policies that are most relevant to the state’s UGB policies will be examined. Of all the goals expounded by the department, those which deal with agricultural lands (Goal 3), forest lands (Goal 4), and urbanization (Goal 14) are the most relevant with respect to the state’s UGB policies. Together, they require local jurisdictions - cities, counties, and regional districts - to create and coordinate UGBs which encompass existing urbanized land plus a “market factor” of lands needed to accommodate growth until the year 2000 (Leonard, 1983, 12). Because of the importance of these specific statewide planning goals to Oregon’s UGB policies, they will each be examined individually.

The intent of Goal 3 (“Agricultural Lands”) is to preserve and maintain agricultural land uses. Specifically, the goal attempts to prohibit nonfarm uses on agricultural land.54 Implementation is established by requiring local jurisdictions to apply zoning to agricultural lands that limit nonconforming uses, and which establish minimum lot sizes (80 acres for farms and 160 acres for rangeland) for new lots created under an agricultural designation (Oregon LCDC, 1995). The purpose of instituting such large minimum lot sizes is essentially to discourage the encroachment of urban land uses. The most important aspect of this goal is its preservationist nature with respect to both agricultural land and production. Like Goal 3, Goal 4 (“Forest Lands”) is preservationist in nature, only with respect to both the forest land base and the forest industry. The primary intent of this statewide planning goal is to preserve the forest industry as a sustainable contributor to the state’s economy by requiring local jurisdictions to prohibit urban land uses that would threaten the continued operation of forestry practices. Therefore, local comprehensive plans must designate “forest zones”, and hence afford them protection from the

53 The guidelines do not have the force of law behind them the same way that the substantive content of policies do.
54 Agricultural land is defined by soil suitability as determined by the Soil Capability Classification System of the United States Soil Conservation Service.
infringement of nonconforming land uses (Oregon LCDC, 1995, 7). Taken together, therefore, goals 3 and 4 are intended to compel local jurisdictions to designate and protect renewable resource lands.

Without question, Goal 14 ("Urbanization") is the most important of all statewide planning goals in terms of relevance to the state’s UGB policy. Indeed it is this goal which establishes UGB policy in the state. Specifically, the goal’s intent is to ensure that there is an “orderly and efficient transition from rural to urban land use[s]”, and that UGBs are established and amended based on the following considerations:

1. Demonstrated need to accommodate long-range urban population growth requirements consistent with LCDC goals;
2. Need for housing, employment opportunities, and livability;
3. Orderly and economic provision for public facilities and services;
4. Maximum efficiency of land uses within and on the fringe of the existing urban area;
5. Environmental, energy, economic and social consequences;
6. Retention of agricultural land as defined, with Class I being the highest priority for retention and Class VI the lowest priority; and,
7. Compatibility of the proposed urban uses with nearby agricultural activities (Oregon LCDC, 1995, 21).

As a result of the provisions of this planning goal, local jurisdictions are required to state in their comprehensive plans how the above considerations are being addressed. A formal state review process ensures consistency of local plans and the content of this goal.

The Urbanization goal also provides guidelines which suggest a manner in which UGBs be implemented. Particularly, the goal emphasizes the utility of phasing public facilities, including transportation, as a means of directing growth to urbanized areas, and away from resource lands (Oregon LCDC, 1995, 21). Furthermore, financial and tax incentives and disincentives, as well as concurrency land use regulations are suggested as other means of directing urban growth to

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55 To refer to these goals as such is somewhat of a misnomer in the sense that these goals are probably better understood as “rules”.
existing urban areas within the boundaries, thus ensuring contiguous development and preventing premature pressures to extend the boundary (Oregon LCDC, 1995, 21).

Overall, the three goals discussed above primarily comprise the state’s UGB policy. As Leonard states “taken together, these three goals require cities and counties to cooperate in drawing urban growth boundaries that encompass land already urbanized as well as the additional amount of land necessary to accommodate anticipated growth to the year 2000” (Leonard, 1983, 13). Renewable resource land outside the boundary is further protected due to requirements that such land be zoned for Exclusive Farm Use (EFU). Perhaps the greatest weakness of this policy is that there are no binding policies addressing development within the boundaries, and hence no safeguards against sprawl within the lines. The consequences of this flaw in the policy will be expanded upon in section 5.4.2 of this chapter. Nevertheless, it is important to emphasize that the statewide land use goals provide a necessary framework which establishes UGBs as the primary means of managing urban growth and protecting renewable resource lands.

2.2.2. State Review of Local Plans

The review of local plans by the state, specifically by the LCDC, is another important element arising from the passage of Senate Bill 100. The primary intent of this requirement is to ensure that local plans are internally consistent, and conform to statewide planning goals. Bill 100 requires all jurisdictions with planning authority to prepare comprehensive plans. These plans are then required to be submitted to the LCDC for review. LCDC then determines whether the submittal is consistent with statewide planning goals through an “acknowledgment process”.

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56 As discussed above, such policies are guidelines for implementation, and so are consultative rather than executive.
57 This consists of the submission of the plan to the DLCD which reviews the plan, invites comments from interested parties, and submits a report to the LCDC which then submits the plan for public hearing, and who
When a plan is determined to be consistent with all statewide planning goals and guidelines, it is said to be “acknowledged”. Until a plan is acknowledged, the state retains authority over all local land use actions” (Knaap & Nelson, 1992, 23). Any comprehensive plans deemed to be inconsistent with statewide planning goals and guidelines are “remanded to local governments with specific instructions on how to improve them” (Knaap & Nelson, 1992, 24). This oversight role of the state regarding local land use planning is viewed as an essential element to the successful implementation of UGB policy in Oregon, and specifically in the Metro Portland area (Bob Clay, 1997, pers. comm.). Therefore, state review of local plans ensures that policies are interjurisdictionally coordinated, which is crucial to the success of any UGB policy (Gale, 1992).

2.2.3. Enforcement

Concomitant to the state review function of the LCDC is its important role in enforcing its mandate. Recall that one of the greatest weakness of Senate Bill 10 was the absence of enforcement mechanisms. In recognition of this deficiency in policy, Senate Bill 100 gives the LCDC the power to enforce its authority over local land use planning. In other words, if a local jurisdiction fails to comply with either mandatory plan preparation or statewide land use goal requirements, the LCDC can prepare and enforce its own land use plan and development regulations in the noncompliant jurisdiction(s) (Knaap & Nelson, 1992, 24). Other enforcement mechanisms provided for the LCDC include: the ability to impose development moratoria on noncompliant jurisdictions; the ability to grant building permits in noncompliant jurisdictions that have enacted development moratoria; the ability to charge noncompliant jurisdictions any or all

ultimately decides whether the plan is compliant with all statewide goals and guidelines (Knaap & Nelson, 1992, 23).

58 At a policy level rather than a day-to-day level.
costs associated with enforcement; and finally the ability to withhold state transfers, grants, or local shares of shared revenues from offending jurisdictions (Knaap & Nelson, 1992, 24). There are numerous examples of the LCDC enforcing state growth management laws, most of which occurred in the late 1970s when local authorities were skeptical about the LCDC’s will to enforce the statewide planning program. For example, the LCDC overturned Beaverton’s six-month moratorium on building permits in 1978, arguing that the impending establishment of the UGB would require greater densities in Portland’s suburbs (Leonard, 1983, 17). As well, in an extreme case, the LCDC ordered the city of Wilsonville to halt approvals on all new large residential developments on the city’s fringe until a tighter UGB was drawn (Leonard, 1983, 16). Finally, the LCDC ruled that the comprehensive plan of St. Helens was invalid because it failed to designate land for the development of multifamily dwellings (Leonard, 1983, 17). Similar precedents were also set by the 1000 Friends of Oregon, who frequently initiated court action upon noncompliant local jurisdictions. For a more complete listing of enforcement examples, please refer to Leonard (1983, pp. 16-25) and Knaap & Nelson (1992, 30-31).

Clearly the ability of the approving agency to enforce its decisions is a vital part of the overall statewide planning system in Oregon. Without enforcement, consistency among plans is unlikely, and incentives relating to the achievement of the statewide planning goals will revert to carrots from sticks; a situation that failed to work efficiently under Senate Bill 10.

2.3. Overall Significance of Statewide Planning in Oregon

To summarize, Oregon’s statewide land use planning system is comprised of three primary elements: statewide land use goals, an “acknowledgment process”, and the LCDC’s ability to punish noncompliant jurisdictions. The success of the overall system is entirely dependent on the
individual success of each of the elements comprising the system. For example, without the ability to review local plans, or issue enforcement orders, the statewide land use goals established by the LCDC would doubtfully be taken seriously. In this system, the roles of various planning jurisdictions are clearly delineated; “while cities and counties remain the planners and the implementers of the Oregon land use system, the state has review and approval authority over local plans through [the] acknowledgment of compliance process” (Leonard, 1983, 11). The system is therefore rigidly hierarchical in the sense that while local jurisdictions remain responsible for planning, they are planning and implementing state-established directives. While this system shares many of the goals and objectives associated with the British Columbian system, the two differ in a number of important and obvious ways. First, while growth strategies in the *Growth Strategies Act* are technically approved by the Minister of Municipal Affairs, approval is generally a result of a cross-acceptance process. Second, interjurisdictional consistency requirements in the *Growth Strategies Act* take the form of regional context statements and to a lesser degree the cross acceptance process for approving growth strategies and regional context statements, whereas in Oregon local authorities are mandated by state law to comply with a set of statewide planning directives. Finally, the Oregon system has a clear set of implementation and enforcement mechanisms to compel local authorities to comply with state policy, as opposed to the *Growth Strategies Act* which lacks such enforcement mechanisms.

3. **Metro Portland’s UGB Policies**

What has been discussed to this point has been the statewide land use planning policies that apply to each substate jurisdiction within the state of Oregon. This section narrows the focus by examining policies relevant to Metro Portland’s UGB. Metro Portland is a regional district
which covers land area in three counties, and which encompasses twenty-four cities (refer to Figures 5-1 and 5-2). Clearly, the need for intergovernmental coordination of policies is of foremost concern with respect to managing the Metro Portland UGB.

Figure 5-1  Metro Portland’s UGB
3.1. Regional Governance

The need to manage future urban growth brought the region’s communities together in 1966. The end product was a regional planning program, created in 1971, which came to be known as the Columbia Region Association of Governments (CRAG). CRAG, mandated by state law, established the region’s UGB in 1977 (Metro, 1997a).

In 1979, the Metropolitan Services District (Metro) was created, and took over the planning roles and authority of CRAG, which at that time primarily included the maintenance of the UGB. Metro is a directly elected regional government, which is governed by an executive officer, an auditor and a seven-member council. Both the executive officer and the auditor are elected regionwide, and the individual councilors are elected by district (Metro, 1996a). Metro’s governance structure and responsibilities were clarified following the passage of the 1992 Metro Charter (Metro, 1992, 1).

The primary responsibility of Metro is that of managing the region’s growth. Metro is therefore the primary agency responsible for the maintenance of the Metro Portland UGB (Metro, 1997a). In order for Metro to meet its mandate, it was granted special tasks by the state legislature including:

- Coordinate between regional and local comprehensive plans and adopt a regional urban growth boundary.
- Review for and require consistency of local comprehensive plans with statewide and regional planning goals.
- Planning for activities of metropolitan significance including (but not limited to) transportation, water quality, air quality and solid waste (Metro, 1997a).

59 This aspect makes Metro a truly unique regional government in the United States, and to a lesser extent here in British Columbia.
In addition to managing the UGB, Metro is responsible for creating and developing regional urban growth goals and objectives (RUGGOs), as well as a growth concept and a regional framework plan (Metro, 1992, Chapter II, Section 5&6). The charter, which requires regional uniformity of land use policies, stipulates that the *Regional Framework Plan* for Metro must be completed and adopted by December 31, 1997. At present, the efforts of Metro have produced the aforementioned RUGGOs and the growth concept (*Region 2040*). As well, Metro has recently adopted a functional plan\(^{60}\) which begins preliminary implementation of *Region 2040* and the region’s RUGGOs. The *Region 2040 Growth Concept* and its associated functional plan are discussed in detail below.\(^ {61}\)

### 3.2. The Region 2040 Growth Concept

The *Region 2040* Plan is designed to identify, develop, and define specific land use and transportation policies that most effectively manage the region’s UGB (League of Women Voters of Oregon, 1995, 10). The chosen growth concept that represents this intent is a product of a lengthy government consultation and stakeholder participation process. At issue were three broad urban growth directions. The first included accommodating future urban growth by expanding the UGB, thus directing growth in urban fringe and generally rural areas. The second alternative was based on accommodating future growth by mandating infill and redevelopment of urban areas within existing boundaries, thus mitigating UGB expansion by focusing urban growth in presently urbanized areas. The third alternative, a combination of the first two, was based on accommodating growth by limited boundary expansion, combined with some infill and

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\(^{60}\) The function plan is an interim implementation plan for the RUGGOs and *Region 2040*. It will remain in force until it is replaced following Metro’s adoption of the Regional Framework Plan at the end of 1997.

\(^{61}\) Metro’s RUGGOs are omitted from this discussion as they are duly reflected in the *Region 2040 Growth Concept*. 

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redevelopment in conjunction with the creation of self-contained communities outside the UGB (City of Portland, 1993, 2). The chosen alternative represents a hybrid of these three alternatives.

Region 2040 is essentially a growth strategy that examines the amount of UGB expansion necessary to “accommodate demand over 50 years in accordance with different development patterns for the region” (Metro, 1997a). While determining the degree to which the regional UGB must be expanded is a major component of 2040, the strategy also identifies ways in which development within the boundary can be made to be more sustainable. These two components of Region 2040 are discussed separately below, subsequent to a presentation of 2040’s key land use and growth assumptions.

3.2.1. 2040's Key Assumptions

The Region 2040 Strategy is based on a number of assumptions about the region’s growth, and its capacity to absorb future urban growth.

Table 5-1 Key Facts Relating to the Region 2040 Growth Concept

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year Metro UGB Established</td>
<td>1979</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Acres in Current UGB</td>
<td>232,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Acres of Vacant Land Inside UGB</td>
<td>39,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Acres of Land Inside UGB Assumed to be Redevelopable</td>
<td>10,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Buildable Acres (vacant land + redevelopable land) inside UGB</td>
<td>49,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Existing Population within UGB</td>
<td>1.2 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Projected Additional Population inside UGB (including urban reserves) over next 50 years</td>
<td>702,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Acres in Urban Reserve Study Areas</td>
<td>22,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current Housing Split</td>
<td>68% Single Family Residential/ 32% Multi-Family Residential</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Projected New Development Housing Split</td>
<td>64% Single Family Residential/ 36% Multi-Family Residential</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current (1995) Average Lot Size</td>
<td>8,000 square feet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Projected Average New Lot Size</td>
<td>6,200 square feet</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: Metro, 1995b)
3.2.2. Sustainable Land Use Planning Within the Boundary

Region 2040 attempts to create a sustainable urban form within the region’s UGB by establishing mixed use urban centers. The purpose of creating these centers is to produce higher residential and employment densities in close proximity to transit, compact retail, cultural, and recreational services, set within the context of a walkable environment. The growth concept delineates several types of centers, including the Central City, Regional Centers, Town Centers, and Corridors and Station Communities. The types of centers are distinguished by size and accessibility - the larger and more accessible, the more significant is the center designation.

Redevelopment and infill of existing urban areas as a means of establishing these centers is a key strategy of the growth concept. In particular, areas of high unemployment and low property values are emphasized by 2040 as target areas for reinvestment and redevelopment. Thus, planning in these centers is intended to create a better balance of jobs, housing and urban amenities, the objective being to reduce, localize, and make transportation trips more multi-modal. In this sense, the centers established by 2040 are conceptually similar to the GVRD’s system of Regional Town Centres, which form an important part of the LRSP. Both systems are intended to concentrate urban amenities, employment opportunities and residential dwellings, thus improving the jobs-housing balance and reducing the need to travel by car, as greater transit services become more of a reality.

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62 Perhaps one of the strongest weaknesses of this strategy is the lack of attention placed on the possibilities for gentrification this strategy may create.
Figure 5.3 The Region 2040 Growth Concept
3.2.3. Urban Reserves and the Issue of UGB Expansion

The major focus of Region 2040 is on managing the regional UGB in lieu of future growth expectations. As stated earlier, the 2040 concept represents a compromise in the sense that Metro recognized that the UGB must be selectively expanded, despite the absorption of much of the expected growth in existing urban areas through infill and redevelopment. At the heart of the UGB expansion issue is the designation of both rural and urban reserves.

3.2.3.1. Rural Reserves

The intent behind creating rural reserves is to preserve renewable resource lands which are adjacent to the regional UGB, and thus are under intense pressure to convert to urban uses. The rural reserve designation represents a legal commitment by “Metro to not extend its UGB into these areas and to support neighboring cities’ efforts not to expand their urban growth boundaries into these areas” (Metro, 1995c, 4). Zoning in rural reserves will be the primary tool for ensuring their protection. A density of .25 dwelling units/acre would establish extremely large lot sizes, and so will likely prevent the encroachment of urban uses into these reserves. Finally, rural reserves are intended to be used in the growth concept as a means of keeping communities distinct by keeping them separate. In many ways the rural reserve concept in Oregon is similar to British Columbia’s Agricultural Land Reserve. The primary intent behind both systems is to preserve farming land uses as well as farming practices. The main difference, however, lies in the fact that rural reserves in Oregon are a farmland preservation tool used in conjunction with other urban containment strategies, namely the regional UGB. While the Agricultural Land Reserve is strictly designed to protect farmland, it has nevertheless impacted the shape of urban development in the Lower Mainland, and has therefore acted as a de facto urban containment boundary.
3.2.3.2. Urban Reserves

Urban reserves are landbanks designated and protected by zoning for future UGB expansion, thus forming a long-range land supply for the Metro Portland Area. The Executive Officer of Metro identifies five primary roles for urban reserves in a growth management context. They include:

1. **Urban reserve designations are required by law** - State law mandates Metro to designate urban reserves (OAR 660-21; the Urban Reserve Rule). As well, the 1992 Metro Charter requires it to protect lands outside the UGB for "natural resource, future urban or other uses", and makes provisions for the implementation of urban reserves. Finally, urban reserve designations are required pursuant to commitments made in Metro's RUGGOs.

2. **Urban reserves protect resource lands** - Urban reserves protect renewable resource lands by indicating which areas "adjacent to the current UGB are likely to be urbanized at some point in the future. Farmers whose land is not designated as an urban reserve can continue agricultural uses confident that investments in new stock and machinery are likely to be recouped." Wise designation of urban reserves - including jealously guarding every acre of agricultural land - is the single most important step to take toward saving and preserving this region's valuable natural resources”.

3. **Urban reserves control speculation** - Without the designation of urban reserves, all land outside of, and near to, the UGB is subject to speculation.

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63 As is elaborated upon in section 4.3, this is one way the impermanence syndrome is alleviated, thus ensuring the preservation of farmland and farming practices in the region.
4. **Urban reserves support rural reserves** - The health of rural reserves can be better assured if it can be shown that lands have already been reserved for long-term future urban land requirements.

5. **Urban reserves support master planning for the 2040 Growth Concept** - Affording areas urban reserve designations ensures that they are planned in accordance with the standards set by the 2040 Growth Concept, thus allowing easier transitions into future urban development (Metro, 1996c).

Calculating the amount of land needed for future UGB expansion has been completed by Metro Council. An amended version of the growth forecasts that formed the basis of the 2040 Growth Concept were used to determine how much land is needed for urban reserves (Metro, 1997b, 2). This forecast concludes that another 359,663 households and 561,800 jobs will need to be accommodated within an expanded UGB by the year 2040 (Metro, 1996d). The next step is to determine how much of that expected growth can be absorbed into the current UGB. MPAC determined that 243,000 households and 461,663 jobs are reasonable estimates of capacity based on local government policy determinations (Metro, 1996b, 2). Moreover, in determining UGB capacity, Metro attempted to ascertain the rates of redevelopment and infill in recognition that not all new development is “greenfield” development. Hence the rates of redevelopment and infill Metro used in determining UGB capacity include 30% for households and 42% for employment, which marks an increase in overall densities consistent with the 2040 Growth Concept (Metro, 1996b, 2).

Having determined expected growth and current UGB capacities, Metro was able to determine the amount of additional land needed for future UGB expansion. Again in determining
the capacities of the urban reserve areas, the general designations of the 2040 Growth Concept were used, and so planned densities for these areas were set at a minimum of 10 du/a -- a high mix of household types and thus affordabilities was assumed -- and a minimum of 25 employees per acre (Metro, 1996b, 3-4). Planning for such densities, Metro argues, constitutes a proactive strategy for ensuring a balance of jobs and housing in these areas. And, in areas where there is presently a serious imbalance of jobs and housing, parts of urban reserves designated for residential development will be redesignated to employment uses, with the assumption they will develop to the assumed 25 employees per acre densities mentioned above. Overall, having determined expected growth, the capacity of the current UGB, and the capacities of the urban reserves, Metro concluded that an additional 13,893 acres of land will be required to be designated as urban reserves, with at least 61% of that added land being buildable, in order to accommodate expected growth to the year 2040 (Metro, 1996b, 3). Please see Table 5-2. for a summary of these calculations.

### Table 5-2 Summary of Urban Reserve Calculations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Demand (2040 Forecast)</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>359,653 Households</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>561,800 Jobs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Less Existing UGB Supply

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>243,611 Households</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>461,663 Jobs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Less Redevelopment & Infill Potential

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>30% Households</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42% Jobs</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

=Need

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64 Of course, implicit in these calculations is the need for a high degree of "master planning" of these areas prior to their absorption into the UGB.
The final step in the process is to decide where urban reserves shall be located. In designating the urban reserves, Metro was bound by state law ("Urban Reserve Rule") to use a hierarchy of criteria, ranging from non-resource and "exception" lands to prime farm lands. Specifically, the Urban Reserve Rule stipulates that urban reserves be located in a manner such that they provide:

1. orderly and economic provision for public facilities and services;
2. maximum efficiency of land uses within and on the fringe of the existing urban area;
3. environmental, energy, economic and social consequences;
4. retention of agricultural land as defined, with Class I being the highest priority for retention and Class VI the lowest priority; and
5. compatibility of the proposed urban uses with nearby agricultural activities

Furthermore, state law requires that priorities for urban reserve designations be: first priority -- exception areas, nonresource land, or resource land if it is entirely surrounded by exception areas, unless they are high-value crop areas or unique agricultural soils; second priority -- marginal lands with limited agricultural potential; third priority -- secondary lands that are agriculturally

\footnote{URSA is a computer model developed to analyze data used to evaluate the suitability factors required by the Urban Reserve Rule, and thus provide answers about needed capacities (Metro, 1997b, 3).}

\footnote{Recall that exception lands are those lands outside the current UGB developed under Statewide land use goal #2, and which are developed for urban uses (residential) because of their insuitability for agricultural or forestry uses.}
productive, but which otherwise are inferior to prime agricultural lands; and finally *fourth priority* -- prime agriculture or forestry lands which presently are protected by Exclusive Farm Use zoning (Metro, 1996a; OAR 660-21-030). The only exceptions to this criteria, as stipulated in state law, are situations where:

...specific types of identified land needs cannot be reasonably accommodated on higher priority lands; or future urban services could not reasonably be accommodated to the higher priority areas due to topographical or other physical constraints; or maximum efficiency of land uses within a proposed urban reserve area requires inclusion of lower priority lands in order to include or provide services to higher priority lands” (OAR 660-21-030).

In addition to the state law requirements associated with the designation of urban reserves, Metro considered the traffic impacts, the relative costs of servicing, the housing and employment capacities and allocations, and school facilities in the determination of the urban reserves. Of primary importance, however, Metro viewed the determination of urban reserves as an opportunity to correct regional imbalances in jobs and housing. Thus, the impacts on improving the jobs/housing ratio of an area became a very important consideration in the designation of urban reserves (Metro, 1997b, 5-31).

At the time this thesis was written, no final decision had yet been made regarding how much urban reserves were needed, or where they would be located. However, Figure 5-4 does indicate where the *proposed* urban reserves are situated, pending final approval by Metro Council and the LCDC. The following statements are excerpts from the Executive Officer’s recommendations with respect to the designation of urban reserves. Collectively, they exemplify Metro’s philosophy guiding the expansion of the regional UGB.

I am recommending that the Metro Council adopt 14,000 acres of urban reserves. Of that 14,000 acres, I recommend that only 800 acres of natural resource lands be included. The only reason I advocate for any natural resource land is because those specific 800 acres already are surrounded

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67 The preceding discussion examined the process by which such decisions were made, and did not mean to imply that the figures presented represented final decisions.
by urbanization. It makes sense, and meets state requirements for exceptions, that those acres be placed within urban reserves.

Also part of my recommendation is to re-designate 575 acres of land within the urban reserve study area from residential to employment uses. This would provide a better balance of jobs and housing, primarily in Clackamas County where there is more housing than jobs.

In addition to preserving natural resource lands, Metro should continue support and maintain a compact region. This means designating the minimum amount of urban reserves necessary to satisfy expected need.

I also recommend that whatever acres within the 23,000-acre urban reserve study area that are not selected as urban reserves be placed into the category of rural reserves - further protecting them from both urban and rural sprawl (Metro, 1996c, 1-4).

It can be seen in Figure 5-4 that most of the urban reserve land is located within Clackamas County. The reason for this is that much of the anticipated growth in Washington County is expected to be accommodated within the UGB because of the existence of a sizable amount of buildable land within the boundary. In contrast, Clackamas County has relatively little potential for redevelopment or infill, and has little buildable land inside the boundary. Therefore, much of the urban reserve land has been designated adjacent to the section of the regional UGB containing Clackamas County (Metro, 1997b; Metro 1996b).

Overall, the determination of urban reserves is clearly an important component to the Region 2040 Growth Concept. Their designation is one of the means the region purports to accommodate expected future growth. As evidenced by the Executive Officer’s recommendations, Metro is clearly seeking a very selective and minimal boundary expansion, in accordance with the values expressed in Region 2040 and in Metro’s RUGGOs.
Figure 5.4 Location of Proposed Urban Reserves

Legend:
- Existing Urban Growth Boundary
- First Tier Urban Reserve
- Other Urban Reserves
- PU Landa
- Resource Lands in Selected Urban Reserves
To summarize, the Region 2040 Growth Concept is a 50-year growth strategy that primarily aims to encourage compact urban development in order to make more efficient use of land. The end product, as viewed by Metro, is therefore a tight and compact metropolitan region bound by a non-arbitrarily expanded UGB, and characterized by a system of centers which increase residential and employment densities - making transit more viable, improving the jobs/housing balance, and increasing housing affordability through altered housing mix and density.

3.2.4. Implementation of the 2040 Vision

The primary means of implementing the 2040 Growth Concept is through the adoption of the Regional Framework Plan, which will grant local governments the planning tools required to make the vision a reality. The Metro Charter requires that this plan be completed and adopted by December 31, 1997. However, due to the continued high rates of growth, local governments requested that Metro adopt a functional plan that begins early implementation of the 2040 Growth Concept. The resulting Urban Growth Management Functional Plan establishes requirements, tools, and specific guidelines for land use, transportation, water quality, and parks for local authorities to use until Metro adopts the Framework Plan at the end of 1997. The implementation of the 2040 vision differs significantly from the manner in which the GVRD intends to implement the LRSP. The 2040 concept is implemented through the enactment of another plan, whereas the LRSP is implemented through a series of intergovernmental partnerships in accordance with the Growth Strategies Act.

As defined in the Metro Charter, a functional plan is a limited-purpose multi-jurisdictional plan for an area or activity of regional significance (i.e., growth management), and which serves
as a guideline for local comprehensive plans which must be consistent therewith in form and substance (ORS 268.390). Metro Council adopted this *Urban Growth Management Functional Plan*, by ordinance, on November 21, 1996. It contains both “recommendations” and “requirements”, the latter compelling local governments to change their comprehensive plans so as to be consistent with the requirements of the functional plan. The specific purpose of the *Urban Growth Management Functional Plan* is to implement Metro’s RUGGOs and their 2040 *Growth Concept*. The most significant parts of the plan include measures for increasing housing and employment capacities, compliance measures, rural reserves, and performance standards. Each of these are elaborated upon below.\(^\text{68}\)

3.2.4.1 Requirements for Housing and Employment Accommodation

In order for the region to meet its 2040 growth targets, and thus require only minimal UGB expansion, the *Urban Growth Management Functional Plan* requires local jurisdictions to utilize a variety of tools to increase their housing and employment capacities, and to make more efficient use of urban land. This section of the plan supports the use of development standards that encourage smaller lots and more flexible use of land, strategies to encourage land assembly, and flexible zoning and permit fast tracking. Specifically, the plan requires all cities and counties within Metro to include in their comprehensive plans and implementing ordinances minimum density standards. This is expressed in the plan as follows:

Cities and counties shall apply a minimum density standard to all zones allowing residential use as follows:

1. a. Provide that no development application, including subdivision, may be approved unless the development will result in the building of 80 percent or more of the maximum number of dwelling units per net acre permitted by the zoning designation... (Metro, 1996e, 3).

\(^{68}\) This functional plan does not address the urban reserve issue, due largely to the fact that decisions regarding this issue have yet to be finalized. The urban reserve issue will therefore be addressed in the Framework Plan.
This minimum density standard has the force of law behind it, and so would invalidate any local comprehensive plan, or implementing ordinance, that is not in compliance therewith.

Furthermore, in an effort to abolish exclusionary zoning practices in the urbanized parts of the region, the plan stipulates that cities or counties shall not prohibit the partitioning or subdivision of lots inside the UGB where those lot sizes are two or more times that of the minimum lot size for the applicable development code (Metro, 1996e, 4). Finally, the plan prohibits cities and counties from denying the construction of accessory suits within any single family dwelling “that is permitted to be built in any zone inside the urban growth boundary” (Metro, 1996e, 4). The only situations to which this minimum density requirement do not apply include rural development outside the UGB, open spaces within the boundary, and in areas designated as unbuildable within and outside the UGB (Metro, 1996e, 4).

The *Urban Growth Management Functional Plan* also contains provisions for increasing zoned capacity for areas where there are large discrepancies between built and zoned densities. Specifically, if a comparison of actual built densities to maximum zoned densities for the 1990-1995 time period shows the ratio to be less than 80%, the local jurisdiction must demonstrate that it has considered and implemented at least two of the following strategies for increasing capacity:

a. Financial incentives for higher density housing;
b. Provisions permitting additional density beyond that generally allowed in the zoning district in exchange for amenities and features provided by the developer;
c. Removal or easing of approval standards or procedures;
d. Redevelopment and infill strategies; and
e. Authorization of housing types not previously allowed by the plan or regulations [i.e., granny flats] (Metro, 1996e, 5-6).

In terms of the designation of the centers, also referred to as “design types”, the plan reaffirms their role as expressed in the *2040 Growth Concept*. Furthermore, the plan recommends average
densities for housing in these centers that would, in Metro's view, make them viable. The average densities are as follows:

- Central City - 250 persons per acre
- Regional Centers - 60 persons per acre
- Station Communities - 45 persons per acre
- Town Centers - 40 persons per acre
- Main Streets - 39 persons per acre
- Corridor - 25 persons per acre
- Employment Areas - 20 persons per acre
- Industrial Areas - 9 persons per acre (Metro, 1996e, 8-10).

Overall, it seems clear that the Urban Growth Management Functional Plan operationalizes the 2040 vision of achieving a compact metropolitan region by requiring that individual cities and counties plan for higher residential and employment densities in strategic locations, thus improving the jobs/housing balance, making mass transit more feasible, and increasing housing affordability through increasing the housing supply and diversifying the housing mix.

3.2.4.2. Rural Reserves

The plan requires all cities and counties, in accordance with the 2040 Growth Concept, to amend their comprehensive plans and implementing ordinances to protect Metro designated rural reserves and green corridors. Particularly, zoning in these areas “shall be for resource protection on farm and forestry land, and very low-density residential (no greater average density than one unit for five acres) for exception land” (Metro, 1996e, 19). In other words, other than very low density development on exception land, no urban uses shall be allowed in rural reserves in order to protect both rural land and practices. Finally, the plan requires cities and counties outside the Metro boundary to enter into legally binding intergovernmental agreements with Metro members.
to further ensure the protection of renewable resource land with rural reserve designations by agreeing to exclude such lands within their UGBs.

3.2.4.3. Performance Measures

The inclusion of performance standards in the functional plan is perhaps the best indicator of Metro’s sincerity about fully implementing the 2040 Growth Concept. The purpose of the performance standards is to monitor the progress of the implementation of the functional plan. Title 9 of the functional plan lists a minimum set of performance measures to be considered by all jurisdictions, and which include:

1. Amount of land converted from vacant to other uses, according to jurisdiction, Growth Concept design type, and zoning;
2. Number and types of housing constructed, their location, density, and costs, according to jurisdiction, Growth Concept design type, and zoning;
3. The number of new jobs created in the region, according to jurisdiction, Growth Concept design type, and zoning;
4. The amount of development of both jobs and housing that has occurred as redevelopment or infill, according to jurisdiction, Growth Concept design type, and zoning;
5. The amount of land that is environmentally sensitive that is permanently protected, and the amount that is developed;
6. Other measures that can be reliably measured and will measure progress in implementation in key areas;
7. Cost of land based on lot prices according to jurisdiction, Growth Concept design type, and zoning; and according to redeveloped and vacant classifications; and
8. The average vacancy rate for all residential units (Metro, 1996e, 34-35).

In terms of monitoring the progress of implementing this functional plan, current levels of achievement, in addition to the proposed levels necessary to be compliant with regional policies must be addressed. Corrections to regional as well as local plans, policies, and implementation ordinances will be made as required in order that stated regional policy objectives be met. Therefore, the inclusion of performance measures into the plan ensures uniformity of plan evaluation among local jurisdictions, and so better enables Metro to monitor local compliance with its plans and policies. The GVRD intends, as part of its implementation of the LRSP, to
"monitor regional change and evaluate progress towards the Livable Region Strategic Plan goals and targets" (GVRD, 1996a, 8). It is clear from this statement of policy that the performance measures developed by Metro are far more detailed than are those of the GVRD, and will thus better enable Metro to monitor implementation of the 2040 vision. As well, because such performance measures are so detailed, they will likely reveal the extent to which local policies are interjurisdictionally coordinated.

3.2.4.4. Enforcement Measures

As alluded to, this functional plan has the force of law behind it due to its adoption as an ordinance by Metro in accordance with state law (ORS 268.390). What this means is that: (1) all local jurisdictions with planning authority within Metro’s boundaries must comply with the functional plan; and (2) Metro has the power to enforce the functional plan vis a vis non-compliant jurisdictions. Specifically, non-compliance -- either in the form of amending comprehensive plans and implementing ordinances which violate the functional plan, or failure to adjust local plans and implementing ordinances to be consistent with the functional plan -- subjects the offending jurisdiction to appeal or “other legal action... including but not limited to reduction of regional transportation funding and funding priorities” (Metro, 1996e, 33). Therefore, there is a strong financial incentive compelling local jurisdictions to comply with the provisions of the functional plan. As noted previously, this aspect of enforcement is far less pervasive in the context of the Lower Mainland in that the Growth Strategies Act contains no enforcement provisions.

Overall, with respect to the Urban Growth Management Functional Plan, it is important to reemphasize the fact that it is the interim operationalizing document for both Metro’s
RUGGOs and its *Region 2040 Growth Concept*. There are countless examples of other “RUGGOs” and “Region 2040 Growth Concepts” adopted by other jurisdictions. But perhaps the one common weakness of such policies with lofty, seemingly unattainable ideals is that very few of them, if any, are accorded legal status through a formal adoption of an “implementation plan”, which is required by state/provincial law.

### 3.3. Tying It All Together

Oregon has been heralded for being a pioneer with respect to many planning policy innovations, none of which do as much for managing unchecked urban growth as the combined efforts of Metro’s RUGGOs, its *Region 2040 Growth Concept*, and its *Urban Growth Management Functional Plan*. To discuss one in the absence of the others would make little sense in understanding the formulation and implementation of UGB policy in Metro Portland. Together, they represent a concerted effort aimed at managing growth through protecting the integrity of the region’s UGB by ensuring the efficient use of urban land within the boundary, and a commitment to preserving the region’s renewable resource lands and forestry and agricultural practices. All three “policies” are mandated by state law to be internally consistent, consistent with one another and consistent with statewide land use goals. So in answering the question of how these three policies fit together, it is important to understand that Metro’s RUGGOs examined above provide the *vision* that guides local planning. *Region 2040* is the *conceptualization* of Metro’s RUGGOs in the form of a 50-year growth strategy, acknowledged by LCDC as being in conformance with statewide land use goals and objectives. And finally, the *Urban Growth Management Functional Plan* represents the *operationalization* of the *Region 2040 Growth Concept*, and compels local planning authorities to plan in ways that fulfill the goals.
and objectives of Metro policy. While it may appear that many of these policies are redundant, it is nevertheless evident that they individually serve different purposes (vision, conceptualization, and operationalization) while remaining highly interdependent.

4. Evaluation of Metro Portland's UGB Policies

This section looks at how effective UGBs in particular have been at meeting policy objectives. It also examines what sorts of impacts the Metro Portland UGB has had on such things as location of development, housing prices, and the preservation of renewable resource lands. Moreover, some of the problems associated with Metro Portland’s UGB policies will be examined in this context. It is important to note, however, that the policies being evaluated in this section are primarily those that existed prior to the introduction of the Region 2040 efforts.

There are two primary reasons for approaching the evaluation of Metro Portland’s UGB policies in this way. First, the Region 2040 Growth Concept is far too recent to evaluate with confidence. Second, by evaluating pre-2040 policies, and thus discussing some of the shortcomings of those policies, it is possible to briefly revisit the Region 2040 Growth Concept to see how those shortcomings have been addressed. On the whole, Metro Portland’s pre-2040 UGB policies have been a qualified success.

4.1. Impacts on Housing Prices

Recall that in Chapter 2, the theoretical literature pertaining to UGBs remains inconclusive about what sorts of effects they should have on housing prices. There are two prevailing beliefs,

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Please note that discussion about the impact of Metro’s UGB on land values (urban, exurban, and rural) is not discussed in this context largely because of a lack of conclusive quantifiable evidence showing causal relationships. Discussion in the literature remains largely theoretical, and so for a discussion on how UGBs impact land values, see Chapter 2.
however, that have emerged in the literature. One is that housing prices would necessarily rise because the cost of urban land, which is the largest component in the cost of housing, rises as its supply is constrained by UGBs. The second is that the effects on housing prices will vary by housing type - e.g., the price of single family homes will rise, whereas the price of more dense forms of housing will actually decrease.

Contrary to the theoretical assertion that UGBs adversely affect housing prices, it is clear that Metro Portland’s experience with UGBs has not reflected large increases in average housing prices; “the containment of urban growth within urban growth boundaries did not drive up housing prices” (Easley, 1992, 17). Rather, trends for the period 1980-1989 indicate that housing prices in Oregon were actually lower than national averages and average housing prices in neighboring states that did not have similar urban containment policies.

Despite state policy favoring compact urban growth, state land use planning and regulation does not necessarily lead to higher land and housing costs. Contrary to widespread expectations, Oregon’s planning program has not resulted in excessively high housing costs. While it may never be known whether housing price would have been lower without state land use planning, it is clear that statewide planning has not caused residents to suffer housing costs that are higher than those of neighboring states - indeed Oregon’s housing costs continue to be lower (Knaap & Nelson, 1992, 95-6).

There are four primary reasons for housing prices remaining lower than national averages in Oregon, despite the presence of urban containment programs. The first is more of a caveat than a reason. Simply stated, the recession of the early 1980s hit Oregon, and especially Metro Portland, particularly hard, resulting in stunted growth rates (Nelson, 1992a, 13). The second reason includes the presence of considerable undeveloped land areas -- the Metro Portland UGB included a 15% market share -- and infill and redevelopment opportunities within the regional UGB (Nelson, 1992a, 13; Easley, 1992, 17). Third, the presence of the regional UGB in Metro Portland has allowed “investments in urban facilities and services [to be] programmed in a fashion
that enables greater predictability in matching investments with development needs” (Nelson, 1992a, 13). The result of this is a streamlined development process resulting in savings to developers, which can hence contribute to lower housing prices. Finally, the Metro UGB seems to have affected housing affordability through affecting housing mix. A study done by the 1000 Friends of Oregon concludes that housing affordability has been enhanced by the presence of the regional UGB, and statewide planning in general, because it encourages the construction of denser and thus more affordable types of housing (e.g., small-lot single family, attached ground oriented, multi-family, apartments) (Ketcham & Siegel, 1991). This argument is supported by Toulan, who argues that “if growth management did not enhance housing affordability, it also did not diminish it. In fact, the growth in the availability of rental housing, which is a direct product of growth management, leaves Portland in a stronger position to face the challenge of the next few years” (Toulan, 1994, 116). Therefore, for the four reasons stated above, the Metro Portland UGB appears to have not had unfavorable effects on housing prices.

4.2. Impacts on Development Patterns

In theory, the Metro Portland UGB was supposed to concentrate development, and thus reduce sprawl. Has this occurred? The answer here is a very qualified yes. While it appears that development has largely been contained within the UGB, and that higher overall residential densities have resulted from its presence, concerns regarding sprawl within the boundary have
been raised with respect to the policy's overall efficacy in reducing sprawling patterns of
development.

In terms of containing development within the boundary, the Metro UGB seems to have
met its objectives. Data from 1985 to 1989 suggests that only 9% of the single-family units, 0.5%
of the multiple-family units and 1.2% of the new subdivision lots were approved outside of the
Metro Portland regional UGB (Easley, 1992, 18). For that same time period, there remained
insignificant amounts of commercial or industrial development outside the regional UGB. Nelson
confirms this by illustrating how, for the period 1980 to 1989, 168,000 new residents located in
Oregon, over 90% of whom settled within UGBs (Nelson, 1992a, 13). Overall, therefore, it is
clear that development is being restricted within the regional UGB. However, data also suggests
an unanticipated consequence of Metro's UGB policy, which is sprawling patterns of
development within the boundary; essentially a consequence of making the boundary too big.

For the time period 1985 to 1989, development of single-family homes in urban areas
within the Metro UGB occurred at only 68% of allowable densities. For that same time period,
multiple-family developments occurred at only 80% of allowable densities in urban areas within
the UGB (Easley, 1992, 18). The statistics are even worse for development in urbanizable areas
within Metro's UGB: single-family homes built at 59% of allowable densities, and multiple-family
homes built at 73% of allowable densities. Of course, the most significant implication of this
underdensification is that the UGB could become filled with low density development, hence
possibly requiring premature boundary expansion. This pattern of sprawling residential
development is depicted in the table below.
Table 5-3 Residential Development Densities In the Metro UGB, 1985-1989

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Analysis Area</th>
<th>Single</th>
<th>Family</th>
<th>Multiple</th>
<th>Family</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Actual Density</td>
<td>Allowable Density</td>
<td>% of Allowable</td>
<td>Actual Density</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clackamas</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>15.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>13.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urbanizable</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>25.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multnomah</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>27.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>28.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urbanizable</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>17.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>15.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>17.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urbanizable</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>13.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>16.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>16.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urbanizable</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>15.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Source: Easley, 1992; ECO Northwest, 1991)

Other than underdensification, there is another significant unanticipated consequence with respect to the UGB’s impact on development patterns. Experiences with Metro Portland’s UGB policy shows an alarming pattern of low-density urban development outside the UGB in so called “exception lands”\(^{72}\). The primary reason for the prevalence of this sort of development pattern is that developments in exception lands are often not privy to the same sorts of technical review as those located within the boundary. As Nelson (1992a, 15) states, “subdivision and development of exception land on one- to ten-acre tracts is easier in part because everyone has written the land off as neither farmland nor urban land. It slips between the cracks”. The residents in these areas enjoy nearby urban amenities while having that coveted “home in the country”. Further, they are typically affluent and so are more able to fight against future UGB expansions in order to

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\(^{72}\) Exception lands unsuitable for renewable resource use due to their proximity to urban development, relatively poor soil condition, and lot designations too small for commercial farming or forestry.
“preserve their enclaves of exclusiveness” (Nelson, 1992a, 15). The result of this pattern of low density, ad hoc development along the boundary’s periphery is that future boundary expansion becomes a very difficult proposition, in that such development patterns may preclude future urban densities in these areas.\textsuperscript{73}

Overall, it seems clear that the Metro Portland UGB has achieved its objectives of concentrating development within the boundary and raising residential densities, albeit marginally. This particular success, however, is marred by the failure to reach desired densities within the boundary, as characterized by residential sprawl within the lines, and by the fact that lax development regulations for exception lands have led to potentially troublesome development patterns outside, but adjacent to, the regional UGB. As Nelson states, “rural areas that might have been held in reserve for future urbanization have developed in ways that will be extremely difficult to urbanize” (Nelson, 1994, 35).

4.3. Impacts on the Preservation of Renewable Resource Lands

Perhaps one of the largest successes associated with the Metro Portland UGB is the effect it has had on the preservation of agricultural and forest lands in the region. It is important to realize, however, that UGBs are not solely responsible for the conservation of renewable resource lands, but are rather a part of a more concerted policy effort. Nevertheless, without UGBs, both urban and agricultural activities would have to compete for the same land base within the urban-rural fringe (Nelson, 1994, 32). The Metro UGB succeeded in preserving renewable resource lands as evidenced by the retention of large tracts of rural land for resource use vis a vis pressures for urban development, and by increases in resource productivity relative to national trends.

\textsuperscript{73} Such urban densities would also be opposed by the residents, who are more likely to have the resources to fight boundary expansions, and who settled in these areas to escape such densities closer to urban and suburban cores.
Specifically, evidence suggests that between 1982 and 1989 farms in the Willamette Valley increased in average size and productivity per acre, and are producing high value crops such as grapes, for the flourishing Oregon wine-making industry, and berries (Nelson, 1994, 33).

One important way Metro’s UGB helps preserve renewable resource land is by altering expectations regarding future development potential. Rather than having urban and renewable resource uses compete openly, UGBs clearly separate those land uses for very long periods of time. Thus expectations of future zoning as dictated by the presence of the UGB become more predictable. This is important insofar as one of the largest reasons for falling resource productivity in areas without UGBs is the presence of the “impermanence syndrome”, the belief among farmers that “agriculture in their area has limited or no future and that urbanization will absorb the farm in the not-too-distant future” (Nelson, 1992b, 469). This syndrome is manifested by:

...disinvestment in farming inputs, sale of farmland tracts for hobby farm or acreage development, and shifting of crops from those requiring labor or capital intensity, such as berries and orchards, to those requiring little labor or investment, such as pasture or annual crops. The result can be vast areas of underutilized and idled land near and between urban areas (Nelson, 1992b, 469).

Metro’s UGB policy has been effective at alleviating, if not eliminating, this syndrome in three important ways. First, studies show that Metro’s UGB has been successful at shifting regional demand for urban and exurban development away from renewable resource lands and into “targeted areas” (Nelson, 1992b, 474). Second, Metro’s UGB has been successful at having quasi-public goods (e.g., privacy and scenery) exclusively internalized into higher land values regarding urban and exurban land markets which are in close proximity to renewable resource lands (Nelson, 1992b, 475). This internalization is manifested as higher exurban land values
closer to agricultural land because of the quasi-public goods associated therewith, and higher urban land values in closer proximity to exurban land for the same reasons. This phenomena is found to be present in the Metro Portland Region (Nelson, 1988).

The third way UGBs in the Metro region have alleviated the impermanence syndrome is through the removal of speculative pressures on agricultural land. Evidence of this is reflected in declining values of rural land in close proximity to exurban and urban areas (Nelson, 1992b, 475). The reason for the lower values is a result of nuisances, such as pollution, noise and traffic, caused by urban land uses. If these effects are not present, then “the market for farmland is internalizing expectations of conversion to urban or exurban nonfarm uses” (Nelson, 1992b, 475). The market for farmland in the Metro region does not seem to be experiencing this internalization of expected conversion to nonfarm uses, and so it seems clear that Metro’s UGB policy, in conjunction with other farmland preservation policies, have been successful at removing speculative urban land value pressures from renewable resource land.

Overall, any other successes associated with Metro’s UGB policies would surely be overlooked if the policies failed to adequately protect renewable resource lands from conversion to urban uses, one of the most important objectives of UGB policy. Metro’s experiences with UGB policy have, however, illustrated that UGBs are an effective component to renewable resource preservation programs. This is illustrated by the fact that the presence of UGBs contributed to the removal, or at least alleviated the severity, of the impermanence syndrome. Because of this, farms in the Willamette Valley have increased in average size and productivity per acre. In fact, Nelson recalls in many of his articles an anecdote of farmers producing outside the UGB, purchasing exception land for more money than “residentially inclined” buyers were
willing to pay, and then putting that land into high-value crops such as grapes and berries (Nelson, 1994, 33). Nelson concludes, “this would be unlikely in the absence of stable UGBs”, and that “farming in the Willamette Valley owes its survival to the Oregon planning program” (Nelson, 1994, 33; Nelson, 1992a, 14).

4.4. Responses to the Weaknesses of the Pre-2040 UGB Policies

While the above weaknesses of the pre-Region 2040 Growth Concept UGB policies are significant, it is important to note that they have been by-and-large rectified by the passage of the Urban Growth Management Functional Plan in November of 1996. Metro, in drafting the Region 2040 Growth Concept, was fully aware of the weaknesses associated with their UGB policy. As a result, the focus of Region 2040 became that of improving the functional value and management of the region’s UGB. It is important at this point to briefly illustrate how Region 2040 improved the original UGB policy through addressing its unanticipated consequences.

In terms of solving the problem of underdensification associated with the original policy, recall that Region 2040 establishes a series of “centers”, which provide greater direction as to where development should and should not occur within the boundary. The centers system is supported by the institutionalization of minimum zoning requirements -- which requires local authorities to consider infill and redevelopment opportunities -- pursuant to the provisions of the Urban Growth Management Functional Plan. Local planning authorities are now required by law to plan in accordance with this system of centers, and to enact implementation ordinances that ensure achievement of the densities required to make these centers viable. As well, in an effort to prevent any undermining of multi-family zoning, the functional plan prohibits the building of single-family detached homes in these areas. The combined effect of these policies will likely
ensure that the problem of underdensification, including the ills associated therewith, will cease to be a significant concern following the complete implementation of the 2040 Growth Concept.

Region 2040 also addresses two very problematic weaknesses associated with Metro’s original UGB policy - that of development on exception land and the ease with which the UGB has been expanded in the past. Essentially, these problems are resolved in the Region 2040 Growth Concept under the guise of future boundary expansion, and the establishment of “Urban Reserves”. As discussed earlier, urban reserves must be designated by Metro as areas for future urban expansion, in accordance with the Urban Reserve Rule (OAR 660-21-030). By doing this, exception areas no longer remain lands that “slip through the cracks”, and which are consequently hosts to low density residential development that would otherwise not be allowed within the UGB. Through their designations as urban reserves, Metro gains the authority to enact regulations that ensure that development in these areas does not preclude an orderly and efficient boundary expansion in the future, and hence the conversion of these areas to higher-density urban uses. In this way, much of the exurban and hobby-farm development - which is viewed as a result of the original policy’s weaknesses - is regulated to occur in more “appropriate” locations. Furthermore, the establishment of urban reserves is supportive of Region 2040’s effort at conserving renewable resource lands with rural reserve designations insofar as urban reserves remove speculative pressures from that land. Therefore, for the reasons mentioned above, Metro’s Region 2040 policies pertaining to urban reserves will likely correct much of the exception land development characteristic of the original policy, and which has been the focus of many due criticisms over the years.

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74 These are among the two most cited criticisms of Metro’s UGB policies.
5. **Summary and Conclusions**

The UGB policies of Metro Portland were examined and evaluated in this chapter in an effort to put the Lower Mainland's growth strategies in comparative perspective. The reasons for using Metro Portland as a case study were two-fold. First, as with many other Oregon state policies, both the statewide land use legislation and the specific growth management initiatives of Metro Portland have been viewed as pioneering in both academic and professional contexts. As well, because Metro’s UGB policies have been in use for nearly three decades, there is enough data to make some evaluations of that policy in terms of its efficacy in both containing urban growth and in preserving renewable resource lands. Second, the social, geographical, economic, and demographic characteristics of Metro Portland are similar to those of the Lower Mainland, and so the transferability of experiences is generally favorable in comparing and contrasting urban containment policies of these two regions.

This chapter began with a discussion of the statewide land use planning system in Oregon. Initially, this system was established with the passage of *Senate Bill 10* in 1969. Statewide planning matured, however, with the passage of *Senate Bill 100* in 1973, which forms the present statewide land use planning framework for which Oregon is well known. It established a more precise set of statewide land use goals, ranging from UGBs (*Goal 14*), renewable resource lands preservation (*Goals 3 & 4*), to transportation (*Goal 12*) and housing (*Goal 10*). Perhaps most importantly, *Senate Bill 100* established a system of monitoring adherence to statewide goals and of enforcement to compel noncompliant jurisdictions to abide by the statewide framework. The Land Conservation and Development Commission (LCDC) as well as the Department of Land Conservation and Development (DLCD) were instituted to ensure local plans were consistent
with statewide land use goals. Furthermore, they were mandated with the authority to punish non-compliant jurisdictions through withholding either technical assistance or funding (some examples were provided).

Having established the statewide land use planning framework, attention then focused on the individual UGB policies of Metro Portland. In this context, the evolution of the Metro regional government was discussed, based primarily on three crucial documents which together establish and implement the region’s growth strategy. Metro, which is responsible for managing Metro Portland’s UGB, established a set of goals and objectives that constitute a vision as to how the region intends to accommodate expected growth to the year 2040. They are mandated by state law, and require acknowledgment by the LCDC. In 1996, Metro announced the adoption of their 50-year growth strategy, the Region 2040 Growth Concept. This strategy is a conceptualization of the vision espoused in Metro’s RUGGOs. It focuses on improving the functional value of the region’s UGB, and extending its lifespan by another forty years, from 2000 to 2040. There are two primary components to Region 2040. The first deals with development within the UGB. In order to ensure that development occurs in compact forms within the boundary, Region 2040 establishes a system of “centers”. Perhaps the central issue surrounding Region 2040, however, is the issue of expanding the UGB in order to meet 2040 growth projections. It was shown that the establishment of urban reserves is the main strategy for ensuring an orderly and efficient future boundary expansion and resultant growth pattern.

The final document comprising Metro’s growth strategy is the Urban Growth Management Functional Plan, adopted by Metro Council and acknowledged by LCDC in November of 1996. This plan operationalizes the Region 2040 Growth Concept. Provisions in
this document require local jurisdictions with planning authority to establish minimum density requirements in order to make the system of centers viable, thereby reducing sprawl within the boundary. This functional plan also instituted performance measures so that the plan’s implementation could be monitored, as well as enforcement mechanisms to compel local jurisdictions to plan in conformance with this plan.

An evaluation was made of the region’s UGB policies’ efficacy in meeting stated objectives. It was determined that the pre-Region 2040 UGB policies should be evaluated, as those found in 2040 are far too recent to evaluate with confidence. The evaluation generally indicated that the pre-2040 UGB policies were a qualified success. The success is qualified because, while it was shown that the policy was effective at both containing urban growth without significantly impacting housing prices and preserving renewable resource land, the policy nevertheless had some unanticipated consequences. Although densities were higher than what would have occurred in the absence of the UGB, underdensification within the boundary was evident, which might have led to premature pressures to have it expanded. It was also found that low-density rural and urban developments could be undertaken with ease outside the boundary on exception lands. Finally, it was shown that Metro addressed these shortcomings associated with the initial UGB policy in their second generation of UGB policies (the 2040 efforts) through the establishment of minimum density requirements and the designation of urban reserves. Clearly the original UGB policy -- which has already been deemed an overall success -- was improved by Metro as a result of the 2040 process, and only time will tell as to whether these changes will make the Metro example a model one.
CHAPTER 6 - CONCLUSIONS, LESSONS LEARNED AND AVENUES FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

1. General Discussion

This thesis set out to answer a number of questions about urban containment in general and more specifically about urban containment in the Lower Mainland. The primary objective of this thesis was to put the urban containment policies of the Lower Mainland in comparative perspective. This was accomplished by contextuating a detailed discussion of the GVRD’s LRSP and the Growth Strategies Statutes Amendments Act, 1995 within the policies of two case studies. The case studies served as examples of successful urban containment policies which utilize UGBs as their main instrument of policy. This final chapter will offer some brief observations and lessons learned from the two case studies regarding urban containment in the Lower Mainland. Furthermore, some discussion about the extent to which the information presented in the literature review is confirmed by the case studies will be presented. Finally, this chapter offers some final thoughts in the form of an examination of avenues for possible future research.

2. Theoretical And Practical Consistency

Before presenting the observations, it is important to first examine the extent to which the case studies confirmed what was learned in the literature review. The literature review revealed some very important considerations associated with UGB policy. The first consideration essentially defined their purposes as being the containment of urban growth, and the preservation of ecologically significant and renewable resource lands. The policies of both Thurston County, Washington and Metro Portland, Oregon cite these two purposes as the foundation of their UGB policies. The second consideration was that UGBs are an extremely simple concept on the one
hand, yet on the other, they are very complex policy considerations. In this sense it was shown how future UGB expansions must be considered in the formulation of the policy to prevent incompatible land uses on the boundary periphery that would make future expansion difficult. While not evident in the Thurston County case study, the issue of dealing with potentially troublesome land use patterns along the boundary’s periphery was a particular focus of the Metro Portland Case Study. Metro recognized that exurban and hobby farm development along the regional UGB’s periphery was both an inefficient land use pattern as well as a possible barrier to future boundary expansion and urban densities in these areas. Moreover, such development along the Metro UGB periphery was viewed as a failure of the initial UGB policy, thus the Region 2040 efforts focused heavily on rectifying this problem through the establishment of urban reserves, giving Metro greater control over land uses in these areas. Overall, with respect to the need to consider future boundary expansion and the necessity of limiting exurban development along the boundary’s periphery, it is evident that the Metro Portland case study seems to support the information presented in the literature review.

Also in regards to UGB policy design, the literature stresses the importance of interjurisdictionally coordinating land use policies and development control regulations to prevent any undermining of broader policy directives. This policy design consideration was viewed as an essential contribution to the UGB policies of both case studies presented in this thesis. In the policies of Thurston County, interjurisdictional coordination was assured because of the strict provisions of the Washington State Growth Management Act, 1990, which demands that all local policies be internally consistent, as well as consistent with broader policies as set forth in statewide planning goals. The Metro Portland example also exemplified the importance of
interjurisdictional coordination of policies. It was shown in this case study that all local plans and policies must be deemed to conform with broader statewide planning goals and objectives through a formal acknowledgment process. As well, it was argued that the rigid state-dominant planning framework in Oregon was responsible for the success of Metro’s UGB policies. Interjurisdictional coordination of policies was also shown to be a vital element in growth management initiatives in the Lower Mainland. The GVRD’s LRSP recognizes the need for such coordination in policy, and this need is addressed in the Growth Strategies Act through regional context statement requirements and the cross-acceptance process associated with the formulation of growth strategies. Therefore, it is clear that the case studies, as well as the philosophy behind policies of the GVRD and the Province, support the information presented in the literature review that pertains to the overall importance of interjurisdictionally coordinating policies.

The third and final consideration the literature emphasizes with respect to UGB policy is the impacts on land values, housing prices, location of development, and the preservation of renewable resource lands. Consistent with the above considerations, the case studies confirm what the literature states about the impacts of UGBs. The Metro Portland case study clearly shows that new development is contained within the boundary. This case study also reveals that housing prices have not been significantly impacted by the imposition of the regional UGB. This is so largely because a market factor was included in the determination of the UGB’s size, and because the presence of the UGB resulted in a more diverse housing market. What became evident, however, was that the inclusion of a market factor essentially made the boundary too big, hence reducing its efficacy in alleviating sprawl within the lines. Finally, it was shown that UGBs are effective at preserving renewable resource lands, as evidenced by the reduction of the
prevalence of the impermanence syndrome, and by farms in the Willamette River valley increasing in both size and production.

Overall, it is clear from the above discussion that the information arising from the case studies is consistent with that presented in the literature review. In other words, the findings from a “practical” examination of Thurston County’s and Metro Portland’s UGB policies are consistent with information presented in the “theoretical” discussion of UGB policies in Chapter 2.

3. Observations and Lessons Learned

The primary intent of this thesis was to put the urban containment policies of both the GVRD and the province of British Columbia in comparative perspective. It was hoped that by doing so, a series of observations could be made with respect to information that has come to bear on growth management initiatives in the Lower Mainland. Chapter 3 provided a detailed examination of both the GVRD’s LRSP and the province’s Growth Strategies Statutes Amendments Act, 1995. Together, these two documents set the context for growth management in the Lower Mainland. It was argued that, while these initiatives contain some ambitious elements, they nevertheless will likely be ineffectual without strong municipal commitment. It was also asserted that the primary weakness of both the GVRD’s and the Province’s growth management initiatives is that they lack a coherent set of implementation and enforcement measures. Finally, it was suggested that elements of the UGB policies of the sorts discussed in the two case studies would be both effective and complementary strategies in the context of growth management in the Lower Mainland.

The research questions associated with this thesis are addressed in the form of “lessons learned”, which are listed below. These lessons are based on information that has come to bear by
placing the GVRD’s and the Province’s growth management initiatives in comparative perspective with the UGB policies of both Thurston County and Metro Portland. There are several themes worthy of note, including: interjurisdictional coordination of policies, state or provincially sponsored growth management programs, the presence of legislated growth management, supportive implementation ordinances, and enforcement measures. The experiences of the two case studies suggest that these themes are heavily interrelated. In other words, there is not one overall element found in the policies of the two case studies which determines their success. Rather, the success of the broader UGB policy is not so much determined collectively as it is by the successful implementation of each of the policy’s component parts.

3.1. Lesson 1

The two case studies exemplify the successful use of a comprehensive and distinct urban containment policy that utilizes UGBs. While the GVRD’s Green Zone strategy draws de facto UGBs, they are premised on “negative marketing”. That is, the Green Zone essentially protects certain areas of resource or ecological significance, the boundaries of which form a set of urban containment lines. The particular weakness of this approach is that there are gaps in the boundary, and so it fails to ensure contiguity of urban development. These gaps may be a result of the Green Zone’s particular focus on the preservation of certain land uses, rather than on growth management, and specifically on urban containment. Both case studies showed that UGBs, if properly implemented, could be effective at ensuring that development is contiguous, thereby limiting the extent of leapfrog development. In the case of Thurston County, county-wide policies, in accordance with state law, forbid the annexation of territory beyond the urban growth area of a municipality. And in the case of Metro Portland, development beyond the regional UGB
is subject to stringent restrictions and is generally limited to rural designations. What is important to draw from the case studies in this respect is that by having a separate and distinct UGB policy, a maximum limit of urban expansion is set, and so planning proceeds from a set of premises devoted to the maintenance of the UGB, which consequently works toward ensuring the contiguity of urban development.

There is perhaps one barrier to the development and implementation of a separate and distinct UGB policy in the Lower Mainland. As the literature review and the case studies clearly indicate, the development of a UGB policy is a lengthy and labor-intensive proposition. In an age of ever-increasing budget cuts, appropriations for the staff levels needed to properly formulate, implement, and enforce a comprehensive UGB policy must be justified on both economic and political grounds. This inherently leads to value-laden decisions based on what people view as important. Nevertheless, the fiscal arguments favoring compact urban development are compelling ones, and so justifying expenditures on creating and implementing a UGB policy should not prove difficult.

3.2. Lesson 2

*The success of the UGB policies discussed in the two case studies seemed to be heavily influenced by the presence of statewide growth management legislation.* In both the Thurston County and the Metro Portland cases, statewide legislation set forth a series of land use or planning goals. The significance of having these planning goals is to ensure that all local jurisdictions are planning for common objectives. The primary importance of this legislation, therefore, is to ensure that growth management policies are (1) mandated by all local authorities, and (2) interjurisdictionally coordinated. The latter point cannot be overstated. In both case
studies, the primary aim of the statewide legislation was to ensure that growth management policies were interjurisdictionally coordinated. The reason for this is essentially to prevent broader policy aims, such as the statewide planning goals, from being thwarted at local levels.

How does this compare to the situation in the Lower Mainland? As mentioned, there is provincial legislation concerned with growth management. The problem is that it does little to ensure implementation regulations are interjurisdictionally coordinated. While the legislation requires the preparation of regional context statements compelling local authorities to consider the regional perspective with respect to a number of issues, it nevertheless falls short of setting clear urban containment goals for all local authorities including regional districts insofar as urban containment is not considered a required element of a regional growth strategy. As well, the legislation fails to indicate how growth management objectives should be achieved, meaning local planning proceeds from a premise that makes interjurisdictional coordination of local policies potentially troublesome. Furthermore, unlike the legislation discussed in the two case studies, local authorities are not required to comply with the legislation unless a growth strategy is formulated by a regional district. Such strategies can only be imposed upon regions if the Minister of Municipal Affairs so decides. What seems clear therefore is that growth strategies should not be voluntary. Rather they should be mandatory, and they should include a required urban containment element that is part of the growth strategy. In this way, municipalities would be forced to go beyond mere considerations of the regional perspective in their plans. This would ensure that policies are interjurisdictionally coordinated because planning would proceed from a common set of growth management objectives and instruments of policy.
What was also evident from the two case studies is that state growth management legislation gave regional growth management plans and policies binding legal status. This was accomplished by establishing, within state legislation, enforcement mechanisms to ensure that local jurisdictions comply with broader regional and state policies. In both of the Thurston County and the Metro Portland examples, there existed the threat of sanctions that could potentially be imposed on noncompliant jurisdictions, and a few examples were provided where sanctions were used to ensure compliance. Moreover, many of these sanctions involved monetary reprimand -- such as withholding state grants, technical assistance, tax revenues, and transfer payments -- that could financially cripple noncompliant jurisdictions.

One of the largest problems with the *Growth Strategies Act* is that it lacks enforcement mechanisms. There are two main levers the province could use to enforce its legislation. One is that the Minister of Municipal Affairs may require a regional district to prepare a growth strategy, which was otherwise considered voluntary. The second is the establishment of implementation agreements, the contents of which remain vague in the legislation, and which are only legally binding to the extent they are considered a contract. Because the implementation agreement only applies to agreements between the province and the region, there is little to ensure municipal compliance with a growth strategy apart from the regional context statement. The important point to note is that there are no clear means of enforcing growth strategies under the *Growth Strategies Act*, especially in regards to the application of sanctions upon noncompliant jurisdictions.

Thus, what the two case studies indicate is that in order for UGBs to be implemented in the Lower Mainland as part of the LRSP, regional districts need to have the power and credibility

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to enforce their plans. By including enforcement mechanisms that involve monetary sanctions in provincial growth management legislation, both the province and regional districts would be in a better position to implement and enforce broader growth management policies. Such a system is sure to be perceived by local planning authorities as impinging on their autonomy. This need not be the case, however. As was particularly evident in the Metro Portland case study, local jurisdictions enjoyed a high degree of planning autonomy within a rigidly hierarchical planning system. What is important to understand is that where issues of regional or provincial significance are concerned, they must be addressed in a clear and coherent manner, as opposed to an ad hoc, piecemeal, municipality-by-municipality approach. Finally, managing growth at the local level is often a difficult proposition because of the nature of local/neighbourhood politics. Under the current system, rarely do local politicians take a definitive stand on growth management issues because they are so volatile at the local/neighbourhood level. The presence of strong provincial legislation that requires regional growth strategies to contain urban growth would give these politicians an “out”. In a sense, they could defer responsibility and accountability to either the regional district or the province (or both) should containing regional growth become acrimonious at the local level. This “out” is frequently used by local politicians in both Oregon and Washington who defend certain policies by claiming they are required under state law, thus abating responsibility for those policies in favour of the state (Fred Knotsman, 1997, pers. comm.).

Overall, it seems clear that the information from the two case studies suggests that the Growth Strategies Act could be made to be more effective if it were amended in a way that: (1) mandates urban containment as a required element of a regional growth strategy; (2) ensures
better interjurisdictional coordination of policies than what is currently required under the cross-acceptance process and regional context statements, and encourages joint municipal-regional planning; and (3) establishes enforcement mechanisms that include the power to impose either monetary or authoritative sanctions, by either the province or regional districts, upon noncompliant jurisdictions.

3.3. Lesson 3

Having a province-dominant system would not necessarily be incongruent with consensus based decision making, or citizen participation. In both case studies, the state growth management legislation contained provisions assuring opportunities for citizen participation. This participation was made particularly salient by noting the success of citizen organizations such as the 1000 Friends of Oregon and the 1000 Friends of Washington. Both organizations represent citizen interests in their respective states by ensuring that local jurisdictions abide by growth management laws, and by representing the public at land use appeals and growth management board hearings. Through organizations such as this which are given legal standing, citizens have a voice, albeit limited, in matters concerning growth management in general and UGB expansion or amendment specifically. Indeed, these organizations are well known for their legal militancy in ensuring that citizens are being heard, and that local jurisdictions are complying with broader policies. The current *Growth Strategies Act* allows for early and ongoing citizen participation, although it does not state how such participation must be manifested, nor does it expand legal standing to representative citizen organizations of the sorts discussed above. Clarifying how citizen participation must take place, as well as expanding legal standing to a representative
citizen organization may reduce the prevalence of “consult and ignore” in the Lower Mainland, due potentially to their greater influence in the judicial system.\textsuperscript{75}

As alluded to above, a province or statewide planning system is compatible with notions of consensus based decision making, to which the province and the GVRD have indicated a commitment. It seems evident that consensus based decision making would be primarily manifested in the formulation of the province-wide urban containment goals. The fact that the goals are province-wide does not necessarily mean they are entirely determined by the province. Instead, this would be a good opportunity for municipalities, regional districts, and the province to work together. Indeed such joint efforts have proven successful in the Thurston County example in that the joint planning requirements of county-wide policies have resulted in local and regional “buy-in” to the broader UGB policy framework. Staff at the Thurston Regional Planning Council indicated that the threat of sanctions associated with the Washington State GMA was not the impetus for such buy-in (Lynn Dosheery, 1997, pers. comm.). Rather it was a policy framework that encouraged the interaction of different levels of government in the establishment of growth strategies, and in particular UGBs.

\textbf{3.4. Lesson 4}

\textit{Both the Metro Portland and Thurston County examples illustrate a UGB policy that initially failed to achieve a compact urban form.} Failure to achieve compaction was marked by sprawl and underdensification within both case studies’ UGBs. Indeed the Metro Portland case has often been criticized on these grounds. What is important to note is that both Metro Portland and Thurston County have enacted minimum density zoning requirements that phase development

\textsuperscript{75} Of course, one potential danger here, as in the Metro Portland case study, is that planning becomes very legalistic, and policy becomes increasingly affected, even determined, by court rulings.
away from urban cores to correct this problem. As well, in each of the cases single-family detached housing became a prohibited use in areas zoned for multifamily dwellings. Minimum density zoning also plays a large role in the achievement of Metro Portland’s system of centers, envisioned in their *Region 2040 Growth Concept*, and is meant to curb sprawl within the regional UGB.

The failure of the original UGB policies of both case studies to achieve compaction should be strongly noted in the context of the Lower Mainland. In order for the GVRD to achieve a compact metropolitan region, it seems clear that minimum density zoning requirements must be a part of each member municipality’s official community plans. It is accepted that redevelopment and thus greater densities may occur without a regulatory “push”. But in order for the GVRD to meet its objectives concerning the establishment of a growth concentration area by 2021, it is evident that minimum density zoning requirements would be a useful tool in this regard. At the time this thesis was written, regional context statements were still being prepared in regards to the LRSP, and no municipality was considering minimum density zoning requirements. Nevertheless, the case studies offer some valuable policy considerations with respect to making a compact metropolitan region viable. In order to avoid sprawl within the boundary, minimum density requirements that phase urban development away from the urban core need to be enacted and enforced. Put another way, UGBs merely contain urban sprawl, whereas supportive implementing regulations, such as minimum density requirements, alleviate such patterns of development by directing growth to urban cores (where higher densities are most appropriate).
3.5. Lesson 5

A comprehensive UGB policy in the Lower Mainland is compatible with current efforts at managing growth in the region. Metro Portland’s Region 2040 Growth Concept is uncannily similar to the GVRD’s LRSP in nearly every respect. First, they both have a system of mixed use centers and growth concentration areas designed to create a more compact metropolitan region. The Region 2040 Growth Concept establishes a series of centres that provide a balance of urban amenities and services, jobs and housing. Center designations include the City Center, Regional Centers, Town Centers, Station Communities, and Transit Corridors, each of which are determined by accessibility and their share of the market for employment, housing and urban amenities. The GVRD’s LRSP also establishes a series centres, called regional town centres, predicated on similar theoretical ideals; the improvement of subregional jobs housing balances.

The other primary point of correspondence between the Region 2040 Growth Concept and the LRSP is that they each seek to preserve ecologically significant and renewable resource lands. In the case of Portland, the 2040 plan establishes rural reserves and reinforces the preservation of lands with Exclusive Farm Use zoning. The intent is to preserve farming land uses and practices in the region. In the case of the GVRD, the LRSP establishes a Green Zone that is supposed to conserve various types of lands, such as ecologically sensitive lands, wetlands, farmland and other renewable resource lands. As well, the Agricultural Land Commission was established in the early 1970s to ensure farmland and farming practices would be protected from urban encroachment. Thus it is evident that in these two important respects, the GVRD’s LRSP and Metro’s 2040 Regional Growth Concept have many points of correspondence.
The main difference between the two strategies, however, is that Metro Portland’s strategy is premised on UGB policies. In that sense, the centers policy, the rural reserve policy, and the urban reserve policy all complement one another, and work toward improving the functional value of the regional UGB. As was mentioned in the Metro Portland case study, the planning staff at Metro view the UGB as the glue that binds the rest of the growth strategy together (Bob Clay, 1997, pers. comm.).

Therefore, because the LRSP espouses many of the same goals and objectives as the Region 2040 Growth Concept, and because it also shares many of the theoretical objectives of UGB policy as discussed in the literature review, UGBs in the Lower Mainland would be compatible with current goals and efforts at managing the region’s growth. By implementing a regional UGB in the Lower Mainland, the limits of urban expansion would be clearly delineated and planning could proceed on that basis. Thus overall, a comprehensive UGB policy for the Lower Mainland would not only be compatible with current policy frameworks, but it would be congruent with current growth management goals and objectives. Further, such a policy would make existing efforts more robust and would give a clear direction as to the underlying purposes of each of the LRSP’s component parts. The Green Zone, presently a set of discontiguous urban limit lines, would be the primary means of preserving renewable resource and ecologically significant lands. In this way, Green Zone lands would be likened to Metro’s Exclusive Farm Use reserves. The Build Complete Communities policies would serve to ensure there is good development within the lines, given minimum density standards are established. Finally, the Compact Metropolitan Region policies, through the establishment of a growth concentration area, would create the core of the urban growth area.
3.6. Lesson 6

UGBs could add to the effectiveness of the ALR and the GVRD's growth strategy.

Determining what value would be added from the imposition of UGBs in the region turned out to be one of the most difficult aspects of writing this thesis. Clearly, the ALR has had a significant impact on urban development in the region in terms of containing urban growth by not allowing the conversion of agricultural land uses to urban uses. The development of the Green Zone reinforces this aspect associated with the ALR. What then would be the benefit of imposing another layer of policy over the existing framework that is not mandated by law to manage growth, but does so incidentally in practice? Based on the evidence presented in previous chapters, there seems to be a few advantages to adding this extra layer of policy.

It was argued in Chapter 5 that UGBs helped to preserve farmland in Oregon by removing the "impermanence syndrome". It was also stated in Chapter 2 that Nelson (1992b) argues that farm preservation programs, such as the ALR, can lead to discontiguous leapfrog development, which hence contributes to extending the impermanence syndrome geographically further into agricultural areas. As a result, reduced productivity and land speculation in these areas occur in expectation of future land conversions (real or perceived). Finally, it was shown by Nelson (1992a; 1992b), Metro (1996c), and the 1000 Friends of Oregon (1991) that farmland preservation programs alone fail to reduce speculative pressures on agricultural land in the absence of a UGB policy, due largely to their perceived long-term uncertainty. In the context of the Lower Mainland, therefore, the value added in implementing UGBs would primarily come from ensuring that urban development is more contiguous, thus alleviating the impermanence syndrome, reducing speculative pressures on agricultural land, and restricting leapfrog
development. While the ALR has obviously played a role in containing urban expansion, it has been unable (and unequipped) to ensure that urban development occur in a contiguous manner. Indeed, if one were to refer to urban reserves designated by the ALC for the Lower Mainland (ALC, 1990), it would become clear that, if developed, expansion would be discontiguous and the impermanence syndrome would likely worsen. As the ALC does not see growth management as one of their mandates, it seems logical that UGBs would make current efforts at containing urban growth and preserving agricultural land in the Lower Mainland more robust.

While the ALC is not mandated to manage growth, it has a vital interest in redirecting growth pressures away from the ALR. Through the *Compact Metropolitan Region Policies* of the LRSP, growth is intended to be concentrated in a metropolitan focus area. It was argued earlier that, based on the experiences of the two case studies, minimum density zoning requirements would be an effective means of ensuring compaction. UGBs, however, could also add to current GVRD efforts. Specifically, the two-tiered UGB system developed by Thurston County in the late 1980s serves as a good example. In the context of the LRSP, a two tiered UGB system would have two clear advantages. One is that the metropolitan focus area could be delineated by an interim UGB that would serve to redirect growth inward. The other is that the developed areas within the second tier could serve as the long range urban reserve. The key to the success of any two-tier system, however, is a commitment to keeping the long-range UGB static. That is, the UGB is not necessarily expanded in accordance with updated growth projections. Instead, it is expected that growth be concentrated within the two tiers, and that it expand contiguously outward from the urban core over time. This system would complement the ALR in that the outer UGB is static and growth is phased to expand outward from the
metropolitan core, thus alleviating urban development pressures on ALR land, consequently reducing land speculation and the impermanence syndrome. While this two-tier UGB system may not add much conceptually to the LRSP, it does add certainty to the potential creation of a metropolitan focus area if used in conjunction with other policy mechanisms such as minimum density and concurrency requirements.

The final aspect in which UGBs would augment the ALR includes the fact that UGBs are a package of policies that deal with more than just issues of urban fringe development. In this sense, UGBs could operate in a more proactive manner than the ALR. Since the establishment of the ALR in 1973, urban containment has been premised on negative marketing. That is, urban containment never became an issue until urban land uses began to conflict with land protected by the ALR. Moreover, the ALC is not mandated to develop comprehensive growth management strategies that use UGBs. Thus if UGBs are viewed as a package of proactive policies that are congruent with the ALC’s efforts, and that they address issues of vital concern to the ALC that it itself cannot appropriately address (such as urban development issues that could alleviate urban fringe development), then UGBs in the Lower Mainland would add greater assurance to the ALR’s integrity, and would therefore not necessarily be redundant. The two case studies exemplified this point.

In each case, UGBs were complemented by farm preservation programs and were not viewed as an unnecessary layer of policy, but rather an important component to a broader strategy to contain urban growth and preserve renewable resource lands. Specifically, in Thurston County UGBs are used despite the existence of rural, agricultural, and critical land areas designated by local authorities and protected by state laws (see Chapter 4). The purpose of UGBs in this
instance is to proactively address potential urban development pressures on these lands. As well, in Metro Portland, the UGB is used in conjunction with Exclusive Farm Use reserves, and again is not viewed as redundant but instead as a requisite part of the overall growth management program. While the Metro UGB is designed to contain sprawl, it should be noted that EFU areas play a large role within the UGB itself, as not all land within the UGB is necessarily urban, and so here is a case where farmland preservation programs work within the confines of a UGB. The general point should be clear. UGBs are not meant to supplant farm preservation programs, such as the ALR, but are meant to augment them by establishing a proactive -- farm preservation programs as urban containment tools are reactionary -- framework for containing urban growth. Finally, the two case studies illustrated that UGBs are not viewed as a redundant layer of policy due to the existence of farmland preservation programs.

The preceding discussion illustrated three primary ways UGBs would contribute value added to current efforts at containing urban growth in the Lower Mainland, with specific reference to how UGBs would augment the region's *de facto* greenbelt -- the ALR. As a final note, it should be emphasized that UGBs need not necessarily be considered expansive concomitant with urban growth. Indeed they are most effective when viewed as permanent, and so the recommendations made in this thesis favour a static UGB, as opposed to one that expands every time growth projections are reviewed such as that which is purported in the literature. While it may be important to consider possible future UGB expansions, they need not be an eventuality. The challenge here is not in implementation or application, but is rather in the politics and the will required of the province and regional districts to remain committed to an ambitious policy that would likely have many opponents, especially from the development community.
4. **Avenues for Future Research**

4.1. **The Role of Regional Governance in Managing Growth**

The two case studies revealed that regional governance was crucial to the success of their growth management policies. As we saw with the Metro Portland example, it became clear that, following the passage of the *1992 Metro Charter*, the Metro government was given a series of powers and responsibilities entirely devoted to managing the region's growth. A study examining a re-evaluation of the role regional districts play in managing growth in British Columbia, specifically in the GVRD, might prove useful in terms of developing more effective growth management policy making procedures.

4.2. **Longitudinal Quantitative Research**

At the time this thesis was written, there was little quantitative data allowing one to make meaningful conclusions about the efficacy of both Thurston County and Metro Portland's UGB policies. A study that looks at these policies' effects over time would be useful and would contribute greatly to our understanding of the true effectiveness of UGB policies at containing urban growth and preserving renewable resource and ecologically significant lands. Such a study would also be useful in that it would more definitively reveal how UGBs affect land values, housing prices and housing mix. To date, most discussion regarding UGBs has been anecdotal; therefore, there is a need for quantitative research on this subject when data becomes more readily available and data gathering techniques become more standardized.
4.3. Achieving Compaction on the Ground

This study, as well as most others concerned with managing growth at a broad level, speak of the need for greater infill and redevelopment opportunities in order to increase densities in urban cores, thus reducing the need for sprawl. Despite the existence of a large body of literature on densification issues in general, more studies are needed with respect to the specific problems of densification vis a vis people’s desires to live in single family detached, ground oriented, homes, especially from a Lower Mainland perspective. Related to this issue is the need to address the NIMBY (Not In My Backyard) forces preventing densification. Finally, there is a need to understand how people perceive density in order to develop policies, and especially design guidelines, that are responsive to those perceptions.

4.4. International Examples

Urban sprawl is not a strictly North American phenomenon. It would be interesting to see how other places around the world manage their urban growth. In terms of relevance to UGB policies, it would be useful to examine the role greenbelts play in Britain’s growth management strategies. Because greenbelts have been in use in England for an extremely long period of time, there would be enough data to conduct quantitative research into their efficacy at containing urban growth, and at preserving renewable resource, ecologically and historically significant lands. Greenbelts serve many of the same functions as do UGBs, and so require similar policy frameworks. Therefore research investigating the effectiveness and impacts of English greenbelts would be of considerable value in the North American context. This is so because English greenbelt policy is similar to North American UGB policy in terms of policy objectives and necessary supportive regulatory frameworks.
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