



POLICY REPORT  
URBAN STRUCTURE

Report Date: September 28, 2010  
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Meeting Date: October 7, 2010

TO: Standing Committee on Planning and Environment

FROM: Director of Planning in consultation with General Manager of Engineering Services; Managing Director of Social Development; and General Manager, Vancouver Park Board

SUBJECT: City Comments on Draft #3 of the Regional Growth Strategy (RGS), Metro Vancouver 2040, September 2010

**RECOMMENDATION**

- A. THAT Council acknowledge the significant progress achieved since Draft #2 of the RGS, resulting from a cooperative process involving leadership from municipal representatives working with Metro Vancouver and TransLink staff, to develop a more policy-based and less regulatory approach, and a clearer understanding of local and regional interests, in this important regional growth management strategy.
- B. THAT Council support the Vision, Goals, Strategies and actions in Draft #3 of the RGS (September 3, 2010), subject to proposed revisions contained in the recommendations below.
- C. THAT with respect to the proposed system of regional land use regulation of employment lands - Council support the proposed approach in Draft #3 to designate areas of Vancouver as Industrial and Mixed Employment in recognition of the regional significance of these lands; and that Council support the proposed measures to exempt small scale changes to Industrial and Mixed Employment areas as well as change land use related to rapid transit stations from regional regulation, as described in this report.
- D. THAT with respect to the proposed system of regional guidance for Urban Centres and Frequent Transit Development Areas locations and uses - Council support the guidelines approach proposed in Draft #3 to

enable municipalities to identify these regionally significant areas without regional regulation of their boundaries; and that Council request Metro to continue to work with staff on potential refinements to the RGS language to allow Mixed Employment areas to be included in Frequent Transit Development Areas, as described in this report.

- E. THAT with respect to the setting of rapid transit priorities in Draft #3 - Council support that the RGS should provide the framework to enable long-term growth in the region, while acknowledging that TransLink should determine detailed rapid transit priorities through future transit plans that are in alignment with the RGS and guided by input from rapid transit studies now underway; and that Council request City staff to continue to work with Metro and TransLink to further refine the language in the RGS to reflect this approach.
- F. THAT with respect to the proposed implementation framework - Council support the overall approach which reflects a reasonable balance of regional and local interests, subject to further clarification of Metro's role in initiating amendments to regional land use designations; and that Council request Metro to add the formulation of additional implementation guidelines to the RGS implementation framework, as described in this report.
- G. THAT Council endorse other minor proposed revisions to the Draft RGS as described in this report and consolidated in Appendix A.
- H. THAT due to the extent of changes made between Draft #2 (November 2009) and Draft #3 (September 2010), Council request Metro staff to strive to ensure the public and all stakeholders fully understand the extent of the changes made and, to the degree possible, have the opportunity to discuss and comment on the changes made.
- I. THAT Council conveys appreciation to Metro for the work to develop a new RGS for a sustainable and livable region; and that this report and its recommendations be sent to the Chair of the Metro Board, to Metro's Chief Administrative Officer, and to the other municipal councils and TransLink.

#### ***GENERAL MANAGER'S COMMENTS***

The General Manager of Community Services recommends approval of the foregoing.

#### ***CITY MANAGER'S COMMENTS***

The City Manager recommends approval of the foregoing.

#### ***COUNCIL POLICY***

The *Livable Region Strategic Plan (LRSP)*, the region's current Regional Growth Strategy (RGS), was endorsed by Vancouver City Council in 1995 and adopted by the regional district in 1996.

The *Vancouver Regional Context Statement (RCS) Official Development Plan*, which demonstrates how the City's plans and policies support the *LRSP*, was adopted by Council in 1999. Vancouver's existing RCS will need to be updated once a new RGS is approved. A RCS is required by Provincial legislation from each municipality within two years following adoption of a RGS. A RCS requires Metro Board approval initially, and for any later changes.

Current Council priorities that are connected to the RGS include affordable housing; strong, safe, and inclusive communities; environment and sustainability; and creative capital and a growing economy.

### ***SUMMARY***

Metro has transmitted Draft #3 of the Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) for a final round of comments before introducing it to the Metro Board for the adoption and ratification process. The new RGS when enacted will replace the current regional growth strategy, the Livable Region Strategic Plan (LRSP, 1996).

Metro released Draft #3 on September 3, 2010 and requested comments by October 15, 2010. This timing is aimed toward a Metro Board public hearing in late November 2010 and final adoption of a new RGS in early 2011.

Council has consistently supported the idea of strong and clear regional policy planning, and specifically the broad Vision, Goals and Strategies contained in earlier drafts of the RGS. The overall framework provides comprehensive guidance and direction that builds on key elements of previous regional plans. This includes maintaining a strong urban growth boundary with protection and enhancement of 'green zone' areas, achieving a compact Metro region, building complete communities, and increasing transportation choices and identifying key rapid transit linkages.

The new RGS tackles timely and urgent issues including a focus on the economy, especially with respect to employment dispersion and loss of employment lands needed for economic growth. A new focus on addressing climate change has also been added. Affordable housing directions provide a balanced approach that recognizes appropriate roles and actions for Metro and municipalities, within the financial and jurisdictional constraints facing them. Other elements of the plan are also in strong alignment with Council's priorities and plans, including the Greenest City Action Plan.

Draft #3 is the product of a challenging but highly successful and collaborative process involving municipal planning directors and representatives from across the region, working effectively with Metro Vancouver planning staff and representation from TransLink to significantly re-draft the RGS. This required considerable commitment and cooperation from numerous municipal planning leaders over the past several months, who were dedicated to achieving an innovative and successful resolution to the key concerns identified by many municipalities regarding Draft #2. This process took a fresh look at how the RGS addressed 'regional significance' and resulted in a re-worked approach to determine the appropriate balance and clarity of regional interests and local interests within the broad Goals and Strategies of the RGS.

Key issues of concern by Council from past RGS drafts have largely been addressed, especially with respect to designation of Industrial and Mixed Employment areas; important new measures have been introduced that provide municipal flexibility in implementing these new designations. A new, more policy-based approach to guiding the development of Urban Centres and Frequent Transit Development areas is also provided. Numerous aspects in Draft #2 that were overly prescriptive from a regulatory standpoint have been addressed, resulting in strong, clear regional policy rather than a more "zoning by-law" approach to regional regulation. Overall, staff believe Draft #3 achieves a reasonable balance between local autonomy and regional oversight, especially with regard to land use decision-making in urban areas. Staff acknowledge the considerable leadership of our planning colleagues and counterparts from across Metro's municipalities, and the willingness of Metro Planning Staff to support this draft.

This report requests relatively straightforward procedural and language refinements to Draft #3 that include: reducing regulation while clarifying policy related to Urban Centre and Frequent Transit Development Area boundaries; allowing Mixed Employment Areas to be located within Frequent Transit Development Areas; clarifying of Metro's role in initiating amendments to regional land use designations; adding implementation guidelines to assist understanding and administration of the plan; and, articulating a clearer role for Metro in supporting renewable energy infrastructure.

This report requests that Metro provide clarity regarding the roles of Metro and TransLink regarding rapid transit priorities in the region. The Evergreen Line is recognized as the first priority given the planning and financial commitments already in place. The RGS should provide the framework to enable and focus long-term growth in the region, and TransLink should determine detailed rapid transit priorities through future transit plans aligned with the RGS - and guided by input from rapid transit studies and processes now underway. Metro has acknowledged that this is an area where complete consensus has not been reached and staff recommend continuing to work with Metro and TransLink to address this. Alignment of Metro's and TransLink's plans is vital to setting the stage for the regional coordination and cooperation that will be needed to achieve them.

Subject to resolving the rapid transit issue and the other minor refinements identified in this report, staff support moving this important RGS toward the ratification and adoption process and final approval in early 2011.

#### ***PURPOSE***

The purpose of this report is to recommend Vancouver comments on Draft #3 of the RGS, for Council to convey to Metro Vancouver in response to the Metro Board request for input. (Draft #3 is titled *Metro Vancouver 2040* and dated September 3, 2010.)

#### ***BACKGROUND***

Metro Vancouver has been working with its member municipalities on a new RGS to replace the existing RGS (LRSP, 1996). Metro produced two drafts in 2009: Draft #1 in April and Draft #2 in November. At Metro's request, Council conveyed preliminary comments in April 2009 and detailed comments in May 2009 on Draft #1. Council

conveyed further detailed comments on Draft #2 in April 2010. This report responds to Metro's request for comments on Draft #3.

On September 24, 2010 the Metro Board endorsed a process that would move the RGS toward approval by early 2011. This would involve a final round of municipal, public and stakeholder review and preparation of a final draft RGS for referral to Metro Board public hearing in early November 2010, and holding a public hearing in late November 2010.

Draft #3 is the product of a collaborative process involving Metro staff joined by municipal planning directors from around the region and representation from TransLink. This process took a fresh look at how the RGS addressed 'regional significance' and resulted in a re-worked approach to determining the appropriate balance of regional and local interests within the broad Goals and Strategies of the RGS.

Park Board staff advise that considerable progress has been made in working with Metro to add the parks and other areas to the Conservation and Recreation designation as identified in Council's April 8, 2010 report on Draft #2 of the RGS (Recommendation D). Confirmation of the addition of CRAB and New Brighton Parks to this designation is awaiting concurrence of the Vancouver Port Authority.

### ***DISCUSSION***

This section is divided into sub-sections to elaborate on each of the Recommendations. Also included is a final sub-section on public input.

### **GOALS AND STRATEGIES (RECOMMENDATION B)**

Goals and Strategies form the basic outline of the draft RGS. These Goals and Strategies, and the resulting land use framework and Actions, are briefly described below. Recommendation B recommends support, subject to later sections of this report requesting revisions to some of the Actions and related material.

Goals and Strategies: The Goals and Strategies are shown in Table 1. For the most part, the Goals and Strategies in Draft #3 are the same as in Draft #2. Compared with the LRSP (1996) the draft RGS provides a new and positive focus on the economy (Goal 2), climate change (Goal 3), and on affordable housing (Strategy 4.1 in Goal 4).

Land use framework: A land use framework for the region to accommodate growth to 2041 is a key aspect inherent in the Goals, Strategies, and Actions. This consists of the following elements:

- An Urban Containment Boundary where growth and development would occur.
- Outside the Urban Containment Boundary are non-urban areas which are protected from urban development. These are the Agricultural Areas, Conservation-Recreation Areas, and Rural Areas. This brings forward from the LRSP what was called the "green zone."

- Inside the Urban Containment Boundary, the main focus for growth and development is in mixed use Urban Centres which contain the highest density residential and the main office and retail activities, as well as a focus for cultural and institutional uses, and are well-connected by transit. The secondary focus for growth and development, primarily residential with supporting commercial, is within Frequent Transit Development Areas along TransLink’s Frequent Transit Network. These Areas are also supported by employment-only lands.
- For economic activity, large scale commercial development is located in the Urban Centres. An important role is also played by employment-only Industrial Areas and Mixed Employment Areas which provide locations for jobs and economic activity that need out-of-Centre locations. Industrial Areas are often in locations well served by road, rail, and water.

While the overall land use framework in Draft #3 is largely the same as in Draft #2. Some wording changes have been made to remove jargon and simplify the language of strategies 3.3, 3.4, 5.1 and 5.2. Staff support the new wording as shown below.

**Table 1: Draft RGS Goals and Strategies (Draft #3 - September 2010)**

Proposed Goals	Proposed Strategies
1. Create a compact urban area	1.1 Contain urban development within the Urban Containment Boundary
	1.2 Focus growth in Urban Centres and Frequent Transit Development Areas
	1.3 Protect the region’s Rural areas from urban development
2. Support a sustainable economy	2.1. Promote land development patterns that support a diverse regional economy and employment close to where people live
	2.2 Protect the region’s supply of industrial land
	2.3 Protect the region’s supply of agricultural land and promote agricultural viability with an emphasis on food production
3. Protect the region’s environment and respond to climate change	3.1 Protect the region’s Conservation and Recreation lands
	3.2 Protect and enhance natural features and connectivity throughout the region
	3.3 Encourage land use and transportation infrastructure that reduce energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions, and improve air quality
	3.4 Encourage land use and transportation infrastructure that improve the ability to withstand climate change impacts and natural hazard risks
4. Develop complete and resilient communities	4.1 Provide diverse and affordable housing choices
	4.2 Develop healthy and complete communities with access to a range of services and amenities
5. Support sustainable transportation choices	5.1 Coordinate land use and transportation to encourage transit, multiple-occupancy vehicles, cycling, and walking
	5.2 Coordinate land use and transportation to support the safe and efficient movement of vehicles for passengers, goods and services

Actions: Each Strategy has a number of Actions for follow-up, separated into those for follow-up by Metro; by municipalities; and by other agencies and levels of

government. Most of the follow up is for municipalities through their Regional Context Statement (RCS).

Council has previously supported the Goals and Strategies, land use framework, and most of the Actions in Drafts #1 and #2. The overall Vision, Goals and Strategies are consistent with Council's priorities as they provide directions that address affordable housing; strong, safe, and inclusive communities; environmental and social sustainability; and creative capital and a growing economy.

With respect to affordable housing, Draft #3 strengthens Metro's role in advocacy with senior government for affordable housing. At the same time, it eliminates the requirement for Housing Action Plans to be included in municipal RCS', while still requiring municipalities to include robust housing policies within their RCS'. Municipalities are encouraged to develop Housing Action Plans, but have more flexibility in how this fits with local circumstances. Draft #3 also addresses Council's April 2010 recommendation regarding how estimates of rental housing demand are addressed in the RGS.

Recommendation B now supports the revised Draft #3 Vision, Goals and Strategies and most of the Actions, subject to Recommendations C through G as discussed in the following sections of this report.

### **REGIONAL LAND USE REGULATION OF INDUSTRIAL AND MIXED EMPLOYMENT AREAS (RECOMMENDATION C)**

In April 2010 Council directed staff to work with Metro and the other member municipalities to find an alternative approach to the prescriptive, regulation-based approach in Draft #2. Draft #3 of the RGS provides a significantly altered approach that re-considers the 'regional significance' of many of the detailed actions within the plan. Staff believe the new draft RGS achieves a much improved balance between local autonomy and regional oversight, especially with regard to land use decision-making in urban areas. The new approach proposed in Draft #3 is described below.

#### **Land Use Designations for Industrial and Mixed Employment Areas**

Designation of Industrial (I) and Mixed Employment (ME) areas is a significant step that will give Metro Vancouver a new role in municipal land use approvals within these areas. The proposed designation approach requires municipalities to identify parcel-based boundaries for I and ME areas for inclusion in the RGS and the municipal RCS. The intent of this designation approach is to address two key regional issues:

- the dispersion of employment to locations outside of existing or planned Urban Centres which results in negative outcomes such as increased auto dependence and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions; and,
- the loss of the industrial and employment land base within the region which has been identified as a significant risk to the region's ability to accommodate economic growth in the future.

The parcel-based designation approach for the I and ME areas is supported because it provides an important mechanism to ensure that economic development has a place to

grow in the region, and it assists in locating employment growth in a more sustainable manner. In response to concerns about the potential rigidity of a designation approach, Draft #3 includes new proposals that provide additional flexibility to municipalities:

- **Policy-based Approach to Defining Uses in I and ME Areas:** Previous drafts of the RGS included a high level of detail regarding the type and range of uses 'allowed' in I and ME areas. Draft #3 provides a policy-based approach that sets out the objectives for these areas in more general, performance-based language. Metro's report summarizing responses to earlier concerns states that municipalities can propose their own definitions of uses and appropriate supportive uses in their RCS'. This approach acknowledges the wide variety across the region, and provides municipalities flexibility in identifying how their local zoning and policies fit the broad RGS objectives.
- **Exemptions Approach for Small Scale Changes and Flexibility for I and ME Uses Around Rapid Transit Stations:** Draft #3 now includes provisions that enable municipalities to make small scale changes to I and ME areas based on a set of 'exemption' criteria. Changes that fit these criteria can be made without seeking any amendment to the RGS, and thus do not involve any Metro oversight beyond a monitoring role. These criteria allow small scale changes (i.e. sites up to 1 ha) to any designation within the Urban Containment Boundary, up to an aggregate maximum area of change equal to 2% of the land area within each land use designation.

In April 2010 Council requested more flexibility in the RGS for areas around rapid transit stations, especially with respect to changing I and ME areas. Draft #3 provides additional 'exemption' criteria around rapid transit stations which allows sites up to 3 ha to be changed as follows:

- from I or ME to General Urban (which allows residential) within 100 m of a rapid transit station; or
- from I to ME to allow a wider array and higher intensity of commercial uses within 250 m of a rapid transit station.

Again, the aggregate maximum area of change is equal to 2% of the land area within these designations. Additional criteria are also applied to these changes to ensure that the economic viability of industrial lands are not destabilized (i.e. sites must be located on the edge of I or ME area, access to roads, rail or waterways are not impeded, etc.). Details are found in Draft #3, Section 6.2.5, p. 56-57.

On balance, staff support these proposals to provide flexibility for municipalities while also ensuring that a land base for economic growth in the region is maintained. Staff also support the proposed 2% aggregate change limit for these designations, noting that this applies to the life of the RGS - which means it applies until this RGS is replaced by a new one.

Staff recommend that Council support the proposed approach in Draft #3 to designate areas of Vancouver as Industrial and Mixed Employment in recognition of the regional significance of these lands. Staff also recommend that Council support the proposed measures to enable municipalities to make small scale changes to these areas, with



additional flexibility to make limited changes around rapid transit stations that could be exempted from regional regulation (RECOMMENDATION C).

### **REGIONAL GUIDANCE FOR URBAN CENTRES AND FREQUENT TRANSIT DEVELOPMENT AREAS (RECOMMENDATION D)**

Urban Centres (UCs) and Frequent Transit Development Areas (FTDAs) are the first and second priority areas, respectively, for accommodating and concentrating future population and employment growth in the region. The general location of UCs are included in the draft RGS and these are largely consistent with, and build upon, those identified in the LRSP (1996). FTDAs are to be identified over time by municipalities, in consultation with TransLink, and are subject to local area planning.

Council has previously supported some regional land use input into UCs and FTDAs, but did not support regional regulation that prescribed specific uses or boundaries for these areas. Draft #3 of the RGS responds to these concerns and it includes a new approach to providing this more general level of regional input:

- **Guidelines for UCs and FTDAs:** Draft #3 of the RGS provides a guidelines-based approach for the range of uses and general locations of UCs and FTDAs (see: Table 2, Draft #3 RGS, p. 17). This approach gives municipality's guidance for what uses are intended within these areas, their transportation characteristics, and general guidance for the location and extent of these areas. Staff support this performance-based approach as it provides more municipal flexibility in determining how these guidelines relate to local circumstances.

While staff support this new guidelines approach, further refinement is needed to the FTDA guidelines as follows:

- **Include Mixed Employment in FTDAs:** The current Draft #3 does not allow the inclusion of Mixed Employment areas in FTDAs. This is in contrast to the RGS proposal that UCs and FTDAs may include Industrial and Conservation and Recreation areas; while also being clear that where this occurs - the Industrial and Conservation and Recreation policies prevail (Draft #3, 1.2.6 d) iii)). Metro staff have raised a concern that inclusion of ME areas in FTDAs may not support appropriate locations and concentrations of employment in UCs.

Staff note that Draft #3 includes a number of strong policy directions that direct major employment to Urban Centres and there is a strong logic to allowing municipal flexibility to include ME areas in FTDAs as they are anchored and supported by frequent transit service. To help address Metro concerns, staff recommend that where MEs are located within FTDAs - that the ME policies prevail (as is already the case with Industrial areas in FTDAs).

With respect to determining UC and FTDA boundaries, Metro notes that these boundaries are of local significance only - provided that they are generally consistent with the guidelines. This is consistent with Council's previous directions for the RGS. Draft #3 provides for municipal flexibility through a somewhat complex approach, as follows:

- **UC and FTDA Boundaries in RCS'**: Draft #3 proposes to enable flexibility for UC and FTDA boundaries by enabling municipalities to include a 'boundary adjustment clause' in their RCS. Metro determined that provincial legislation would allow this clause to be included in an RCS while still remaining 'consistent' with their Official Community Plan (OCP). This would allow municipalities to make boundary changes to these areas but would not require an RCS amendment, so long as these changes are consistent with the RGS guidelines for these areas. This is important because any change to a Metro Board approved RCS would otherwise trigger the need for Board approval of the RCS amendment. Details are found in Draft #3, Section 6.2.6, p. 57.

On the surface this provision provides a measure that would seem to address concerns regarding regional regulation of UC and FTDA boundaries. A closer review of Draft #3 suggests that refinement of the RGS should be considered, as follows:

- **Parcel-based Boundaries for UCs and FTDA's**: Draft #3 includes a 'requirement' that UC and FTDA boundaries are parcel-based in a municipal RCS (Draft #3, Land Use Designations, p. 7). Staff acknowledge that some municipalities may choose to include parcel-based boundaries in their RCS'. However, others may prefer to submit more general location boundaries for these areas in a policy plan format that do not include parcel-based boundaries. Vancouver's Central Area Plan (1991) and "Community Visions" (various dates) are examples of this more general approach to boundaries. In these examples, policy directions and non-parcel-based maps describe the general locations where future change is supported. Staff believe municipalities should be able to determine what level of boundary detail for UCs and FTDA's is included in a municipal RCS, so long as the RGS guidelines are met.

Provision of this municipal flexibility is consistent with the intent of the RGS which identifies UC and FTDA boundaries as only of local significance. Staff believe this refinement of RGS language could help to provide a clear distinction between the designation approach supported for the I and ME areas, and the guidelines approach Council has previously supported for the UCs and FTDA's.

Staff recommend that Council support the guidelines approach proposed in Draft #3 to enable municipalities to identify these regionally significant areas without regional regulation of their boundaries; and that Council request Metro to work with staff on potential refinements to the RGS language to allow Mixed Employment areas to be included in Frequent Transit Development Areas (RECOMMENDATION D).

#### **RAPID TRANSIT PRIORITIES (RECOMMENDATION E)**

Resolving how the RGS should address transit investment priorities is the most substantive issue left to resolve in the RGS.

Metro's RGS acknowledges that transportation systems, especially rapid transit, can both 'shape' and 'serve' the region. The 'shaping' role applies to areas of the region that are less built-up with urban development, and it recognizes the potential for transit to attract new, higher density development. The 'serving' role applies to areas that are built up, and are facing transit capacity issues (i.e. where rider demand

exceeds transit supply). This is due to the intensity of existing (and future) major employment, shopping and other destinations, as well as higher-density residential development in these areas.

Metro has clear responsibility for growth management and the RGS should provide the framework to enable and focus long-term growth in the region. The relative merits of 'serving' versus 'shaping' are appropriate to articulate in the RGS. However, the RGS should recognize that TransLink has clear responsibility for planning and funding regional transportation and transit systems. TransLink's transit plans should not be directed to implement detailed priorities in the RGS as currently proposed in Draft #3. Rather, TransLink's transit plans should establish detailed rapid transit priorities and ensure that these are aligned with the growth management framework laid out in the RGS.

Draft #3 proposes that the first order priority for rapid transit expansion should be the Evergreen Line, connecting Coquitlam's urban centre to the Lougheed urban centre. This is appropriate because of the commitments made by all levels of government to fund the Evergreen Line; the detailed planning, design and business case analysis that support the investment decision; and, it's alignment with the growth management directions set out in the LRSP (1996) and those proposed in Draft #3 of the RGS.

Metro acknowledges that there is not complete consensus on the transit investment priorities proposed in Draft #3. Staff believe that the RGS could address this by providing more clarity regarding the relative roles and jurisdictions of Metro and TransLink, and by reducing the level of detail within the transit priorities section contained in Draft #3.

Draft #3 proposes the following as second order rapid transit expansion priorities:

- connect Surrey Metro Centre to other Urban Centres south of the Fraser, and
- connect the central Broadway area to the existing rapid transit network serving the eastern and southern parts of the region.

Left out of this second priority in Draft #3 are the remainder of the Broadway Corridor in Vancouver and the UBC campus, which could only receive enhanced transit service after Priority 1 and Priority 2 expansions are implemented.

Rapid transit expansion studies are now underway, co-sponsored by TransLink and the Province in Vancouver (the UBC Line - Broadway Corridor Study) and in Surrey (exploring multiple lines). These rapid transit studies will provide a range of information relevant to many aspects of the RGS including: financial information, environmental information (including GHG emissions), and economic development implications. TransLink will use the outcomes of these studies to assist in development of a Rapid Transit Master Plan, which will include future rapid transit expansion priorities and timing. This is an appropriate level of detail for a Rapid Transit Plan, and the plan should align with the RGS.

Metro has stated that due to financial uncertainty about funding for future rapid transit, the entire UBC - Broadway Corridor Line could not be viewed as a legitimate contender when compared to the potential benefits from 'shaping' land use south of

the Fraser with transit investment. At this time, neither the financial nor the broader growth management implications of rapid transit expansion lines under study are known. TransLink's rapid transit studies are still underway and the potential benefits of 'serving' the Broadway Corridor and UBC beyond Central Broadway have not yet been identified.

Staff agree that there is considerable financial uncertainty regarding transit funding, but note that there is also considerable uncertainty about the ability of a growth management plan to deliver growth at the pace, and in the locations, that match transit investment. Many regional observers have noted a lack of development intensity around some existing rapid transit stations, and this situation has prevailed over a considerable period of time. This points out that the relationship between growth and rapid transit investment is indirect; it is influenced by many complex factors such as community attractiveness, market demand, acceptance of local zoning changes, fuel and parking prices, financing costs and incentives, and employment locations.

Alignment of Metro's and TransLink's plans is vital to setting the stage for the regional coordination and cooperation that will be needed to achieve these plans. In addition, regional plans should align with provincial interests and plans. Staff note that the Provincial Transit Plan (2008) identifies the UBC Line as a priority for completion by 2020, although it does not specify routing, technology, or phasing.

Staff recommend that Council support that the RGS should provide the framework to enable long-term growth in the region, while acknowledging that TransLink should determine detailed rapid transit priorities through future transit plans that are aligned with the RGS, and are guided by input from rapid transit studies now underway. In addition, staff recommend that Council request City staff to continue to work with Metro and TransLink to further refine the language in the RGS to reflect this approach (RECOMMENDATION E).

#### **IMPLEMENTATION AND AMENDMENT PROCESS (RECOMMENDATION F)**

A key element of the new draft RGS is a reworked implementation framework. Considerable progress has been made in finding reasonable agreement on matters that are 'regionally significant' and would therefore be subject to Metro Board approval. Just as important are mechanisms to provide municipal flexibility within this framework, including the ability to make local decisions within the RGS as described in earlier sections of this report, without regional oversight and regulation.

Earlier drafts of the RGS sought to ensure that municipal RCS' would be 'consistent' with the RGS. Strict adherence to this requirement was considered too high of a standard by municipal staff familiar with by-law interpretation and administration. Draft #3 now proposes that RCS need only be 'generally consistent' in order to be considered for acceptance by the Metro Board. This is an important move on Metro's part as it provides the Metro Board with the ability to consider RCS' that may vary with the RGS - without requiring an RGS amendment to achieve strict consistency.

The new RGS also addresses the issue of regional significance by establishing three types of RGS amendment, each addressing a different range of RGS elements. For each

type of amendment, there are different thresholds of Board approval reflecting the 'regional significance' of various elements that would be under review. Importantly, the lowest threshold (a 50% +1 vote of the Board and no public hearing) is set for the type of change that would come into play in areas that have been at most concern for Vancouver - that is, changes to I and ME land use designations.

Metro staff have noted that they do not anticipate any noticeable costs or delays to arise as a result of the proposed RGS implementation process. Staff believe this may not be entirely accurate with respect to development projects requiring a RGS amendment. The proposed process is new and it may be unrealistic to expect that no delays or costs are associated with an additional layer of uncertainty in the development approval process. On the other hand, if a project proposes a change that is deemed 'regionally significant', and therefore requires Metro Board approval (i.e. a RGS and an RCS amendment), it is reasonable to expect that there will be additional time and/or cost associated with this. To help address this uncertainty staff recommend that Metro formulate guidelines that will assist developers, Metro staff, municipal staff, and the public to better understand how the process will work (see Additional Guidelines below).

While staff are in support the overall implementation framework there are also some minor adjustments and additions requested:

- **Who Can Initiate an Amendment:** Draft #3 proposes that for a change to a land use designation (i.e. I or ME areas) or the Urban Containment Boundary location, such an amendments can only be initiated by Metro Vancouver or the municipality in which the subject site is located (Draft #3, Section 6.4.1, p. 58). Vancouver staff do not support this wording as it provides the Metro Board an unfettered ability to initiate a change to a municipal land use designations. Metro staff have advised that Metro needs this ability to initiate an amendment as it occasionally acts 'like' a local government (e.g. dealing with unincorporated electoral areas). Staff recommend further refining the RGS language to clarify the circumstances where the Board would initiate a land use designation amendment.
- **Additional Guidelines:** The proposed RGS is significantly more complex and regulatory than the previous LRSP (1996). To assist implementing the RGS, staff recommend addition of new wording in the Implementation section to require Metro to develop, in consultation with member municipalities and key stakeholders, a set of 'implementation guidelines'. Suggestions for areas that would benefit from additional 'guidelines' include:
  - **RGS and RCS amendment guidelines:** to assist municipal staff, the development industry, and the public to better understand the different types of RGS and RCS amendment processes, and to assist Metro staff in standardizing their evaluation criteria, to the extent possible;
  - **RCS preparation guidelines:** to assist municipalities in the preparation of, and Metro staff in the evaluation of, municipal RCS', including standard wording to address items such as 'exemption' clauses; and,

- **FTDA process and review guidelines:** to assist municipalities in working with both Metro and TransLink to identify and include these areas in RCS'.

Staff note there may be other guidelines needed and the RGS implementation framework should give Metro staff direction to work with member municipalities, and other stakeholders, to evolve these over time.

Staff recommend that Council support the overall approach to RGS implementation, subject to further clarification of Metro's role in initiating amendments to municipal land use designations. Staff also recommend that Council request Metro to add the formulation of additional implementation guidelines to the RGS implementation framework (RECOMMENDATION F).

### **OTHER SUGGESTED REVISIONS (RECOMMENDATION G)**

In addition to the items identified in Recommendations C through F, there are a number of other recommended revisions to Draft #3 of the RGS as identified in Appendix A. Staff note that Metro has addressed many of the items identified in previous Council reports and most of the remaining items are relatively straightforward clarifications and language refinements to the RGS.

The opportunity for Metro to play a supportive role in renewable energy infrastructure development is one additional aspect worth noting, as it was requested in previous Council reports and it remains absent from the new draft RGS. Energy infrastructure is key aspect of achieving Vancouver's Greenest City objectives. Metro's response to previous requests notes that more specific guidance on how to achieve renewable district energy systems in different contexts was not thought possible or appropriate for the RGS at this time. Metro notes that this may evolve at the RCS stage or be the subject of separate energy planning initiatives.

However, Draft #3 includes a request for municipalities to identify policies and/or programs that reduce energy consumption and GHG emissions, such as through district energy and renewable energy generation technologies (Draft #3, Action 3.3.4, p. 38). In light of this staff recommend that a similar action request should be added to Metro's role. Metro's action would be, "to support municipalities' development of renewable energy resources by facilitating access to renewable and waste energy sources for district energy systems." In this regard, Metro has already been supportive of Vancouver's efforts to develop a district energy system for East Fraser Lands. Articulating this supporting role would be a valuable complement to Action 3.3.4, and set a direction for the collaborative approach needed to reduce regional GHG emissions.

A consolidated list of all requested revisions is in Appendix C.

### **PUBLIC AND STAKEHOLDER INPUT**

Over the course of developing the draft RGS, public and stakeholder input has been a key concern for Vancouver. Staff have noted that public and stakeholder understanding

and support for the regional plan is one of the most powerful tools in achieving successful implementation of a new RGS.

Metro has conducted an extensive public program accompanying the varying stages of developing this plan and has provided complete summaries and assessments of all comments received. These are available on the Metro web page (address below).

On September 3, 2010 Metro's Regional Planning Committee referred Draft #3 of the RGS (Sept. 2010) to member municipalities, adjacent regional districts, TransLink, provincial and federal governments and their agencies, First Nations, school districts, health authorities, business groups, non-profit organizations and community groups and individuals, with the request that any comments on Draft #3 be submitted to Metro by October 15, 2010.

The September 2009 Draft of the RGS can be found on Metro's web site at: <http://www.metrovancouver.org/planning/development/strategy/Pages/default.aspx>. Metro has also established a web-based comment form on their web site to enable interested parties to provide comment by October 15<sup>th</sup> at: <http://public.metrovancouver.org/planning/development/strategy/Pages/Questions.aspx>.

To allow Vancouver's citizens an opportunity to comment directly to City Council on Draft #3, staff have also provided a web-based comment form on the City web site. Members of the public and stakeholders who have addressed Council on the regional plan in the past have also been notified of this opportunity. The City comment form requests that all comments be submitted by September 30<sup>th</sup> to allow for these comments to be brought forward to Council in early October. This form is available at: <http://vancouver.ca/commsvcs/planning/rgs/index.htm>.

Staff will bring all comments received to Council Committee to accompany consideration of the detailed comments in this report. Alternatively, members of the public and stakeholders can address Council directly at the Council Committee meeting when this report will be considered. All comments received by the City will be forwarded to Metro.

#### ***FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS***

There are no financial implications.

#### ***PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS***

There are no personnel implications.

#### ***CONCLUSION***

This report supports most of Draft #3 including all of the Goals and Strategies that form the basis of the document. It also supports the new approach to regional land use regulation, including designation of Industrial and Mixed Employment lands. This support is based on the regional significance of these employment lands, and the need to prevent further erosion of industrial lands, limit sprawl of low density business parks and big box retail, and focus commercial and retail in more sustainable locations.

To achieve these goals, the report supports concentrating future growth in compact Urban Centres and Frequent Transit Development Areas so that more people can live and work in areas well served by transit. New measures that provide flexibility to municipalities regarding how the land use designations are defined, regulated and implemented are also supported. This report includes requests for a few, relatively straightforward, procedural and language refinements on certain aspects of the plan.

This report notes that there is only one substantive issue in Draft #3 still to be addressed; namely, the proposed approach regarding rapid transit priorities. An alternative approach is provided and Council direction is requested for staff to further refine this aspect of the RGS with Metro and TransLink.

Subject to resolving the rapid transit approach and the other refinements identified in this report, staff support moving the RGS toward ratification and adoption, with final approval in early 2011.

\* \* \* \* \*



**Consolidated List of Recommended Revisions and Updates to RGS Draft #3 -  
September 3, 2010**

All Vancouver comments are listed or referred to here. The comments are grouped by the main sections of the draft RGS. Also included are updates where Metro has addressed recommendations contained in previous Council reports.

**Abbreviations**

RGS = Regional Growth Strategy

RCS = Regional Context Statement

**B: LINKAGES TO OTHER PLANS**

RGS Reference	Topic	Issues and Recommended Revisions
(p.3)	Linkages to Other Plans	<b>Recommendation:</b> Reference to the 2008 Provincial Transit Plan should be included in this section.

**D: REGIONAL LAND USE DESIGNATIONS**

RGS Reference	Topic	Issues and Recommended Revisions
Map 2: Regional Land Use Designations (p.9)	Missing transportation reference	<b>Issue:</b> This map summarizing the RGS land use framework does not include reference to the transportation-related maps contained elsewhere in the RGS.  <b>Recommendation:</b> Add to the notes on the map to provide a reference to the transportation maps in Appendix B.

**GOAL 1: CREATE A COMPACT URBAN AREA**

Goal 1 - Strategy 1.2 Focus growth in Urban Centres and Frequent Transit Development Areas

RGS Reference	Topic	Issues and Recommended Revisions
1.2.9 (p. 15)	Identifying future transit routes and stations	<b>Issue:</b> RGS text notes that the province and TransLink will work with municipalities on the planning of new or expanded Frequent Transit Network corridors and stations. However, there are also other stakeholders within the region to be included in this work.  <b>Recommendation:</b> Replace current wording with "collaborate with municipalities <i>and other stakeholders ...</i> "

## GOAL 2: SUPPORT A SUSTAINABLE ECONOMY

### Goal 2 - Strategy 2.2 Protect the region's supply of industrial land

RGS Reference	Topic	Issues and Recommended Revisions
Map 6: Industrial and Mixed Employment Areas (p. 26)	Port Locations	<p><b>Issue:</b> The locational symbol of the Port on the Fraser River North Arm is missing.</p> <p><b>Recommendation:</b> Add a Port symbol on the Fraser River North Arm similar to that on Map B.2 p.71.</p>

## GOAL 3: PROTECT THE REGION'S ENVIRONMENT AND RESPOND TO CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACTS

### Goal 3 - Strategy 3.2 Protect and enhance natural features and connectivity throughout the region

RGS Reference	Topic	Issues and Recommended Revisions
Map 9: Regional Recreation Greenway Network (p. 36)	Waterfront connections missing	<p><b>Issue:</b> For Vancouver, the map shows an incomplete regional greenway network concept.</p> <p><b>Recommendation:</b> Expand the greenway network concept in Map 9 to include the entire Vancouver shoreline along the north side of the Fraser River North Arm.</p>

### Goal 3 - Strategy 3.3 Encourage land use and transportation infrastructure that reduce energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions, and improve air quality

RGS Reference	Topic	Issues and Recommended Revisions
3.3 (p. 38)	Access to renewable energy infrastructure	See Council report discussion under: <u><b>OTHER SUGGESTED REVISIONS (RECOMMENDATION G)</b></u>

### Goal 3 - Strategy 3.4 Encourage land use and transportation infrastructure that improve the ability to withstand climate change impacts and natural hazard risks

RGS Reference	Topic	Issues and Recommended Revisions
3.4 (p. 40)	Adaptation to climate change	<p><b>Issue:</b> Adaptation to climate change impacts is an important component of local government planning. However, local governments do not have the resources to do the analysis.</p> <p><b>Recommendation:</b> Metro staff advise that they are working on regional climate change strategies including adaptation. Metro's role should include a reference to their ongoing work on research and analysis of strategies for adaptation to climate change impacts.</p>

## GOAL 5: SUPPORT SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORTATION CHOICES

Goal 5 - Strategy 5.1 Coordinate land use and transportation to encourage transit, multiple-occupancy vehicles, cycling and walking

RGS Reference	Topic	Issues and Recommended Revisions
5.1.2 and 5.1.7 (pp.50-51)	Rapid Transit Priorities	See Council report discussion under: <b><u>RAPID TRANSIT PRIORITIES (RECOMMENDATION E)</u></b>
5.1.7 (a)(p. 51)	Map Reference	<b>Recommendation:</b> Add a reference to Map B.1 at the end of this section.
5.1.7 (b)(p. 51)	TransLink Actions Related to Rapid Transit Priorities	<p><b>Issue:</b> Together with comments above regarding rapid transit priorities (5.1.2), new wording should be added to align regional transit planning with Provincial plans. Also, Metro should request TransLink to continue the detailed planning of the priority rapid transit projects identified in 5.1.2 so that these projects are in a position to proceed beyond the selection of preferred technology and routing stage, which is now under study.</p> <p><b>Recommendation:</b> Suggested wording for 5.1.7 b)as follows: b) implement the Provincial Transit Plan in Metro Vancouver, including consideration of Metro Vancouver’s priorities for TransLink’s Frequent Transit Network as identified in section 5.1.2, and continued implementation of the detailed design and construction planning for the priority projects in section 5.1.2.</p>
5.1.7 (d)	Regional parking policy	<b>Recommendation:</b> Add “regional parking policy” as an example of a transportation demand management strategy.

Goal 5 - Strategy 5.2 Coordinate land use and transportation to support the safe and efficient movement of vehicles for passengers, goods and services

RGS Reference	Topic	Issues and Recommended Revisions
5.2.4 (a) (p.53)	Map Reference	<b>Recommendation:</b> Add a reference to Map B.2 at the end of this section.

## F: IMPLEMENTATION

RGS Reference	Topic	Issues and Recommended Revisions
Section F - Implementation (pp. 55 - 62)	Implementation - various	See Council report discussion: <b><u>IMPLEMENTATION AND AMEMDMENT PROCESS (RECOMMENDATION F)</u></b>

## G: PERFORMANCE MEASURES

RGS Reference	Topic	Issues and Recommended Revisions
Goal 5 (p. 65)	Vehicle kilometres travelled (VKT)	<p><b>Issue:</b> All references in Draft #3 to VKTs have been deleted. To assess transportation GHG emissions, VKT is a critical indicator - mode share could trend positively while GHG emissions rise if motorists on average start making longer trips. VKT is being proposed as a measure in the Greenest City Action Plan and was recognized as a key transportation indicator by the Regional Transportation Targets Working Group. If the City and region are to meet GHG targets, strategies to reduce VKT need to be identified and implemented.</p> <p><b>Recommendation:</b> VKT reduction and monitoring should be identified as a strategy for consideration by TransLink, and added back into all sections referencing transportation monitoring, including identification as one of the key transportation performance measures.</p>
Goal 5 (p. 65)	Km of cycling routes	<p><b>Recommendation:</b> Add number of kilometres of cycling routes and lanes to Strategy 5.1 list of performance measures.</p>