

Re: REVIEW OF THE OFFICIAL REGIONAL PLAN FOR THE LOWER MAINLAND OF
BRITISH COLUMBIA

Council has received the following correspondence with respect to the subject regional plan:

- a. Letter dated October 7, 1977, from the Lower Mainland Review Panel which appeared on the agenda for the October 24, 1977 meeting of Council (Item 4b).
- b. Letter dated October 26, 1977 from the Greater Vancouver Regional District which the Municipal Clerk distributed to members of Council. (This did not appear on an agenda).

Both letters are attached for the convenient reference of Council.

As noted in the letter from Mr. J. W. Jeffrey, Chairman for the Lower Mainland Review Panel, it has been requested "that when contacted, you give high priority to setting a firm meeting date for the consultant team, at which time as many elected representatives as possible can attend."

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. THAT the subject correspondence and the Director of Planning's report be referred to the special meeting that is to be held in the future with the consultant team; and
2. THAT a copy of this report be sent to the Lower Mainland Review Panel and the Greater Vancouver Regional District.

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Planning Department
November 15, 1977

TO: MUNICIPAL MANAGER
FROM: DIRECTOR OF PLANNING
RE: REVIEW OF THE OFFICIAL REGIONAL PLAN
FOR THE LOWER MAINLAND

A. BACKGROUND

A letter from Mr. G. F. Farry, Director of Planning for the G. V. R. D., concerning a review of the Official Regional Plan for the Lower Mainland has been distributed to Council. Attached to the letter was a summary of background information for Council prior to a later meeting on this matter.

The summary poses a series of questions for discussion purposes. These will be reviewed in the report which follows.

B. RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS

1. How has the Official Regional Plan assisted your municipality?

The Official Regional Plan has assisted the municipality by providing a broad framework for the development of municipal plans which tie in with general regional goals and objectives

(i. e. population growth guidelines, employment distribution and transportation). The Official Regional Plan provides an additional means of control with respect to the continuing preservation of residential areas, parks and open spaces, and the designation of industrial areas.

2. Has the action of the Province made an Official Regional Plan more or less necessary? Or does the Provincial role mean that the Official Regional Plan should address different matters of a regional nature?

It is not felt that Provincial actions have reduced the need for an Official Regional Plan. It is considered that the Provincial role should be to establish Provincial policies, goals, programs and funding to assist in the implementation of the Regional Plan. The Provincial Agricultural Land Reserve and Floodplain Programs have little effect on Burnaby, except in the Big Bend area, due to the urban character of the municipality.

3. Is there a need for a regional plan of the Lower Mainland Area or should regional planning be divided among the Regional Districts?

Because of the interrelationships which exist between the various parts of the Lower Mainland Area it is our opinion that one regional planning body should be given the responsibility for dealing with the entire area between Vancouver and Hope, as was the case with the former Lower Mainland Regional Planning Board. It is considered that this would provide a more efficient and effective means of regional planning than with the present four regional district divisions.

4. How should a new Official Regional Plan relate to the local planning system?

It should provide a broad and general framework for the planning of the entire Lower Mainland and Fraser Valley areas. Detailed planning, within this framework, should be under municipal control. The roles of the Province, the Regional Planning Board and the member municipalities should be specifically defined.

5. Are there other relevant matters we have not mentioned that you feel are important to the Official Regional Plan review?

- a) The streamlining of the present plan amendment process including a reduction in the number of bodies through which amendments must pass and the establishment of specific criteria for considering amendment proposals.

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- b) The development of a new concept plan and statement of policies for the Fraser Valley Area that would relate to the present Livable Region Concept for the Lower Mainland.

The foregoing is intended to assist the Council in considering the matter of the Official Regional Plan for the Lower Mainland.


A. L. Parr,
DIRECTOR OF PLANNING.

RBC/hf

c. c. - Assistant Director - Long Range
Planning and Research

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CORRESPONDENCE AND PETITIONS
Regular Council Meeting
October 24, 1977

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LOWER MAINLAND REVIEW PANEL

LMRP % GVRD Planning Department
2034 West 12th Avenue
Vancouver, B.C. V6K 2R5

October 7th, 1977

Mayor and Council
The Corp. of the District of Burnaby
4949 Canada Way
BURNABY, B.C. V5G 1M2

Dear Mayor and Council:

RE: Review of the Official Regional Plan for the Lower Mainland

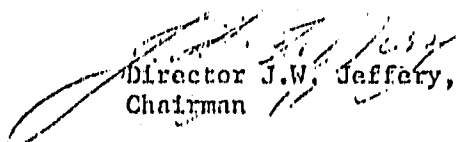
As you are aware, the four Regional Districts in the Lower Mainland and the Lower Mainland Review Panel have been discussing for sometime the program for the first phase of the Review of the Official Regional Plan.

The first phase of the Review is now to be carried out by a consultant team, composed of Mr. Murray Jones of M.V. Jones and Associates Ltd., the prime consultant, and Mr. John Connelly of T.J. Connelly and Associates, the sub-consultant. They have been asked to complete the first phase work by the end of this year and to deal in depth with five main points. These are:

- (1) to advise on the kind of regional plan which is most appropriate to the Lower Mainland;
- (2) to determine the success of the Official Regional Plan since 1966;
- (3) to determine data requirements for update of the Plan and the information gaps that must be filled;
- (4) to outline development issues and growth management concerns that the revised Plan should include;
- (5) to indicate housekeeping changes for the Plan to bring it into line with legislation and organizational changes over the past ten years.

A very important part of this stage of the Review is to obtain as much input from member Municipal Councils or their Planning Committees as possible. Hence, a significant portion of the consultant team's time is to be allocated to these meetings. As the time of year is awkward with the many meetings and election duties, I respectfully request that when contacted, you give high priority to setting a firm meeting date for the consultant team, at which as many elected representatives as possible can attend.

Yours sincerely,


Director J.W. Jeffery,
Chairman

JWJ/RI/ls

Letter sent to all Lower Mainland Regional Districts and Member Municipalities

:- AGENDA - (OCT. 24)
:- COPY - MANAGER
- PLANNER

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Greater Vancouver Regional District

2294 WEST TENTH AVENUE VANCOUVER, BRITISH COLUMBIA V6K 2H9 TELEPHONE 731-1155

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Please refer to our file number:

RECEIVED
 NOV - 1 1977
 MUNICIPAL CLERK'S
 OFFICE

October 26, 1977
 CLERK
 OCT 31 1977
Quid

TO: Mayor and Council,
Member Municipalities of GVRD

RE: Review of the Official Regional Plan for the Lower Mainland
of British Columbia

As indicated in the letter of October 4th from Director Emmott, Chairman of the GVRD Planning Committee, I am attaching a paper on the Official Regional Plan and its review as background information for Members of Council prior to our meeting with you on this subject. This is a synopsis of material which has been presented to the GVRD Board.

The questions which the consultants would like to raise with you at the up-coming meeting are set out in the attached letter from Mr. Murray Jones,

Sincerely,

G.F. Farry
Director of Planning

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Murray V. Jones and Associates Limited

Vancouver, B.C.

Urban and Regional
Consultants

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Edmonton, Alta. T5J 0P1
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Phone: (604) 685-5617

Dear Mayor and Members of Council:

In his letter of October 4, 1977, the Chairman of the G.V.R.D. Planning Committee advised you about a review of the Official Regional Plan. John Connelly and I, as part of our assignment, are conducting a series of interviews with Councils and staff to obtain information and views on the ORP.

We had hoped, as Mr. Emmott indicated, to forward material on the ORP to you prior to our interview. Mapping and other difficulties have prevented us from doing that but we will have enough material at the time of the interview to aid a useful discussion.

So that council members will have an indication of what we would like to discuss we have prepared a set of questions. They are intended to provoke discussion rather than act as a 'questionnaire'.

1. How has the ORP assisted your municipality?

What we want to find out with this question is how the ORP has addressed your conception of regional issues such as population and employment distribution, transportation, servicing, etc. If it has not assisted in addressing these matters what value has it been to your municipality?

2. Has the action of the Province made an ORP more or less necessary? Or does the Provincial role mean that ORP should address different matters of a regional nature?

We pose this question in order to discover if the imposition of the agricultural land reserve, for example, has made the land use control of the ORP redundant. What do you think should be the division of responsibility between the Province and Regional Districts for regional planning?

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Murray V. Jones and Associates Limited

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3. Is there a need for a 'regional plan' of the lower mainland area (the area now contained in the ORP area) or should 'regional' planning be divided among the Regional Districts?

As you know, since the dissolution of the Lower Mainland Regional Planning Board in 1969 there has been no body responsible for lower mainland planning (except the minor advisory role of the Review Panel). We want to discover the nature and extent of inter-District - regional - issues, if any, that would lead us to comment on what kind of an ORP there should be or, whether a series of District plans (combined with Provincial controls) would be adequate.

4. How should a new ORP (as defined by your response to earlier questions) relate to the local planning system?

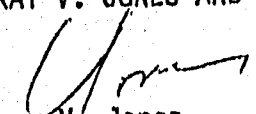
We are of the opinion that in order to answer the question: what kind of ORP is wanted, it is necessary to identify not only the role of the Province and inter-District relations but also to clearly set out the extent and nature of the planning function of the local municipalities. In doing so we hope some consensus might be reached on where the main effort should be in revising the present ORP.

5. Are there other relevant matters we have not mentioned that you feel are important to the ORP review?

I hope you will find these questions useful as a basis for discussion and I look forward to meeting with your Council in the near future.

Respectfully yours,

MURRAY V. JONES AND ASSOCIATES LIMITED,


Murray V. Jones,
President.

MVJ/am

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Greater Vancouver Regional District

2294 WEST TENTH AVENUE VANCOUVER, BRITISH COLUMBIA V6K 2H9 TELEPHONE 731-1155

Please refer to our file number:

THE OFFICIAL REGIONAL PLAN AND ITS REVIEW

Background

The GVRD inherited its part of the Official Regional Plan for the Lower Mainland from the Lower Mainland Regional Planning Board when its functions were transferred to the four Regional Districts in the Lower Fraser Valley.

The Official Regional Plan designates the uses of land in five broad categories in the Lower Mainland. The principal objectives of the Plan were to conserve land resources and to build economic and livable cities by:

- a) keeping urban sprawl off the floodplains and farmlands and directing urban growth to those areas which the municipalities could properly service;
- b) designating major industrial areas and keeping them free of urbanization;
- c) establishing major park and several other reserve categories.

Securing agreement of most of the 28 municipal councils in the Lower Mainland to the Regional Plan maps following adoption of the concepts expressed in "Chance and Challenge" was an important success of the Lower Mainland Regional Planning Board. However, the designations in the Plan do not supersede any municipal zoning which pre-dates the Plan. Thus there frequently is conflict between the Plan and local zoning, particularly in the RURAL-designated areas. However, further zoning changes not conforming to the Plan are prevented. It was hoped that municipalities would bring their by-laws into conformity with the Regional Plan. This has occurred in only a few instances.

Many of the problems addressed by the Plan have been dealt with by more stringent legislation, regulation or policy by the municipalities or by the Provincial Government. Thus the Plan does not have the same importance in GVRD today as it did when it was first formulated in "Chance and Challenge" for the whole of the Lower Fraser Valley in 1963. For example, farmland is now reserved under the Land Commission Act and is zoned by most municipalities. The floodplain is protected by Provincial regulations, although the Official Regional Plan is used as the guide to areas where urban development is permissible. Most municipalities now have sewage systems and treatment plants. Some municipalities have exclusive zoning for industry in their industrial zones. Many of the areas of UNDETERMINED RESERVE have been redesignated to suitable categories over the decade.

The most significant role of the Official Regional Plan, which has not been superseded by more explicit legislation of other bodies, is control of the

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conversion of rural land to urban purposes. This conversion, however, only affects five municipalities and Electoral Area A in GVRD at most. Surrey is the municipality most greatly affected.

The Official Regional Plan has had a number of benefits for the Lower Mainland area and for the Greater Vancouver Regional District over the past decade:

- it introduced the concept of preserving land for agriculture, flood-plain, and industrial purposes a decade before many municipalities and the Province were prepared to act on these matters;
- it has preserved the opportunity for other levels of government to legislate subsequently without too much opposition. It has been a means for containing urban sprawl.

The legislative base for the Official Regional Plan under the Regional District is contained in four clauses of the Municipal Act (795-798 inclusive). The provisions provide for a Regional Board to prepare a regional plan, for that plan to be expressed in maps, plans, reports or any other means to apply to all or part of the Regional District. The Regional Board, by by-law, may designate any Regional Plan an Official Regional Plan if it receives an affirmative vote of two-thirds of the Directors casting two-thirds of the total votes of the Regional Board.

The four Lower Mainland Regional Districts were assigned the regional planning function in 1969 by Order-in-Council. By this same act they were given separate amending powers over the Official Regional Plan in their areas but, in order to maintain cohesion, the Lower Mainland Review Panel was formed. It is a mandatory advisory body on all plan amendments and is composed of the Chairman plus one other member of each Regional Board.

Concerns About the Official Regional Plan

1) When the GVRD Planning Committee and Department were formed, concern was expressed by the new Planning Director, H.N. Lash, that the Official Regional Plan had limited value to the metropolitan area in coping with its urbanization problems because the URBAN-designated lands covering the bulk of developable area in GVRD were open to any type of development at any time and because commitments to programmes which could achieve the Official Regional Plan objectives were lacking in critical areas. Consequently, efforts were directed by the Board and the Department to developing an "operational development plan" (which turned out to be "The Livable Region Programme 1976/86"). The focus of these efforts was development of action programmes for the maintenance of the Region's livability as distinct from general regulation of land use which is the focus for the Official Regional Plan.

2) Present Board members (none of whom were party to the earlier discussions and decisions) have expressed the following concerns with the Official Regional Plan:

- Lots of Official Regional Plan amendments seem to have no regional significance; why are we dealing with them?

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- Floodplain and farmland are not being protected adequately even with Provincial intervention.
- The Official Regional Plan is not an even-handed set of policies as between the municipalities.
- Who, are the Lower Mainland Review Panel and what powers do they have?]
- There does not seem to be adequate criteria by which we can judge Official Regional Plan amendment applications.
- Thank God we have interfered! Where would we be today if the LMRBP had not acted on the floodplain, farmland, industrial areas and parkland?

3) As a first step in undertaking a review of the Official Regional Plan, Mary Rawson, former Commissioner of the B.C. Land Commission, was asked to draft a discussion paper on what the ORP Review should accomplish and how to do it. The following is a synopsis of some of the main points:

- The Official Regional Plan succeeded in preventing the worst abuses of the land resources of the Lower Mainland and there is considerable support for it although there is also irritation with the administrative burden.
- A new concept plan and statement of policies is needed for the whole Valley which addresses today's issues and tomorrow's needs.
- Consciousness of the Valley problems has been lost sight of by existing political bodies, or is not understood by most of the population (who, incidentally, were not here 10 years ago when the Official Regional Plan was adopted).
- Information about the whole Valley has not been kept up and will be needed if Valley-wide policies are to be up-dated.
- The effectiveness of dividing the regional planning function between four Regional Districts is questionable considering only one has really been able to continue the level of activity carried out by the Lower Mainland Regional Planning Board.
- The role of the Provincial Government in regional planning in the Lower Fraser Valley requires clarification in respect to the many provincial programmes which relate to development and management of growth.
- Provision of water and sewer services has not been the effective servant of planned growth as envisioned in the Official Regional Plan; these policies need reconsideration.
- There are gaps in the Official Regional Plan on environmental, transportation and town centre matters that have not been filled through additions to the Official Regional Plan to cover these as had been intended.

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Following considerable discussion at joint meetings, at the Lower Mainland Review Panel and with Mary Rawson, staff and Planning Committee recommended that the 1977 Work Programme carry out the following tasks:

- 1) Survey the municipalities and other agencies using the Official Regional Plan to determine what their objectives are for an ORP Review and what they would expect out of a revised Official Regional Plan.
- 2) Evaluate the past 10 years' performance of the Official Regional Plan to determine the areas of success and the areas of failure.
- 3) Inventory the data available in municipal and regional offices and in the offices of other agencies and assemble the data as far as possible.
- 4) Define issues and concerns of growth and growth management in the Lower Fraser Valley.
- 5) Recommend the most important housekeeping changes to the Official Regional Plan that require immediate attention.

The above Work Programme is the subject of the Official Regional Plan Review being undertaken by Messrs. Connelly and Jones on behalf of the Regional Districts and co-ordinated by the Joint Staff Committee.