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**TO:** CITY MANAGER **DATE:** 2010 October 12

**FROM:** DIRECTOR PLANNING AND BUILDING **FILE:** 71000-01  
**Ref:** *Metro Vancouver Draft RGS*

**SUBJECT:** **UPDATED DRAFT - METRO VANCOUVER REGIONAL GROWTH STRATEGY (2010 SEPTEMBER) - REQUEST FOR MUNICIPAL COMMENT**

**PURPOSE:** To respond to the request from the Metro Vancouver Board for City comment on the updated *draft "Metro Vancouver 2040: Shaping Our Future" – Regional Growth Strategy (RGS)* dated 2009 September.

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**RECOMMENDATIONS:****GENERAL ACCEPTANCE**

1. **THAT** Metro Vancouver be informed that, in reference to the revised RGS document under preparation, the City is in a position to provide for general acceptance of the RGS as a basis for submission to the Regional Public Hearing and subsequent City consideration for approval.

**STRATEGIES AND ACTIONS**

2. **THAT** Metro Vancouver be requested to provide the City with a response to the items raised in Section 3.2 of this report, with an indication of the willingness to accommodate the requested changes, prior to the Public Hearing being held for the Growth Strategy Bylaw.

**Land Use Designation Boundaries**

3. **THAT** Metro Vancouver be requested to amend the RGS to provide for a locational, rather than parcel-based designation, for Urban Centre and Frequent Transit Development Areas.
4. **THAT** Metro Vancouver be requested to amend strategy action 6.4 of the *draft RGS* to ensure that Metro Vancouver cannot initiate changes to municipal land use designations in the RGS without the full support of the affected local municipality.

**Urban Villages and Suburban Multi-Family Centres**

5. **THAT** Council request that Metro Vancouver, in consultation with City staff, either appropriately amend the *draft RGS* to accommodate Burnaby's existing residential and Commercial Policy Framework, specifically Urban Villages and Suburban Multi-Family Communities within the General Urban designation, or alternatively, provide written assurances that these elements can be accommodated within the General Urban designation within the *draft RGS*.

**Role of Mixed Employment Areas**

6. **THAT** a policy based on a density differential between Mixed Employment Areas and Urban Centres be included as a defining criteria for Mixed Employment Areas within strategy action 2.2.4 d) and also be included as an element within Table 2 of the RGS.
7. **THAT** Metro Vancouver be requested to amend strategy action 2.1.4 b) by inserting the phrase "higher density" in the first line before the words "office space in Urban Centres".

**Population, Dwelling Unit and Employment Projections**

8. **THAT** Metro Vancouver be requested to amend the requirement for Regional Context Statements to provide population, dwelling unit and employment projections, as currently presented in strategy action 1.1.3 b) of the *draft RGS* from "...demonstrate how municipal plans will accommodate Metro Vancouver's projected growth" to "...demonstrate how municipal plans will work towards accommodating Metro Vancouver's projected growth ...".
9. **THAT** Metro Vancouver be requested to include Mixed Employment Areas as a land use category within the Employment component of Table 1 in keeping with the intended status of these lands within the RGS.
10. **THAT** strategy actions 1.2.4 and 1.2.6 and the appropriate performance measures in Section G be amended to reflect the intended role of Mixed Employment Areas as employment centres.

**Affordable Housing Policies**

11. **THAT** Metro Vancouver be requested to amend the wording requiring that Regional Context Statements include policies or strategies that indicate how municipalities will address future housing demand as currently presented in strategy actions 4.1.6 a) from "...how municipalities will

meet the estimated future housing demand as set out in Tables A.2 and A.3 to "...how municipalities will work towards meeting the estimated future housing demand as set out in Tables A.2 and A.3..." to better reflect the inability of local municipalities to unilaterally deliver affordable housing stock.

### **Regional Recreation Greenway Network**

12. THAT Metro Vancouver be requested to amend Map 9 (Regional Recreation Greenway Network) of the *draft RGS* to include the Burnaby Fraser Foreshore Greenway to connect with the City of Vancouver and City of New Westminster Fraser Foreshore Greenways.

### **Monitoring and Performance Measures**

13. THAT Metro Vancouver include a "satisfaction" measure from local municipalities with regard to their working relationship with the RGS on an annual basis as one of the Performance Measures to be included within the RGS.

### **Maps for City Land Use Designations Within the RGS**

14. THAT Council submit *Appendix 1, attached* of this report to Metro Vancouver as the definition of the City's boundaries for its General Urban, Mixed Employment, Industrial, Agricultural and Conservation and Recreation areas for designation within the RGS.
15. THAT this report be sent to Metro Vancouver in response to the 2010 September *draft RGS*.

## **REPORT**

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Following the referral of two previous drafts of the *Regional Growth Strategy (RGS)* to member municipalities and other interested parties for review and feedback, Metro Vancouver has now prepared a third, updated draft of the Strategy. At its meeting of 2010 September 3, the Metro Vancouver Regional Planning Committee adopted a number of recommendations relating to the updated draft that included steps to:

- a) refer the report dated September 2010, titled "Draft Metro Vancouver 2040: Shaping Our Future" 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 who previously submitted responses on the drafts with the request that any comments be submitted by October 22, 2010;

- b) arrange a Metro Vancouver Board workshop on the Draft Regional Growth Strategy to follow the September 24, 2010 Board meeting;
- c) convene a special meeting of the Regional Planning Committee on October 29, 2010 in advance of referring the Regional Growth Strategy Bylaw for first and second reading to the Metro Vancouver (GVRD) Board (presumably to review the results of the feedback received);
- d) arrange to have a Regional Growth Strategy Bylaw placed on the November 12, 2010 Metro Vancouver (GVRD) Board meeting agenda for first and second reading; and
- e) schedule public hearings to be held on four nights in four venues throughout the region (including the North Shore, Burrard Peninsula, North East Sector, South of the Fraser) in late November 2010.

As can be seen, the proposed schedule to finalize the formal ratification of the draft Regional Growth Strategy is an ambitious one. In consideration of the specified deadline for submissions of comments to Metro Vancouver, and with the concurrence of the Chair of the Community Development Committee, this report has been advanced directly to Council for its consideration.

Staff is pleased to report that many of the issues and concerns expressed in Council's 2010 March submission to the Board dealing with content issues have been addressed to a degree considered generally acceptable. However, there are a number of issues and concerns that remain. It is a primary concern to City staff that any misunderstandings and differences in interpretation are kept to a minimum as once the Metro Vancouver Board adopts the RGS, it becomes the benchmark for all future decisions relating to conformity with the required Regional Context Statements.

## **2.0 PAST DRAFTS AND RELATED CITY SUBMISSIONS**

### **2.1 Draft Regional Growth Strategy - 2009 February**

The first public version of the *draft RGS* entitled "*Metro Vancouver 2040: Shaping Our Future*" was released by the Metro Vancouver Board in 2009 February. At that time, the Board invited review and comment on the draft by member municipalities. In response to this request, Council adopted recommendations of a 2009 March 18 staff report that reviewed the principal components of the *draft RGS* in relation to the City's adopted area plans, Official Community Plan (OCP), Regional Context Statement (RCS), and policies and procedures.

While there was support in principle for many of the policy based goals, objectives and directions for the *2009 February draft RGS*, its endorsement was not recommended as it did not, from Burnaby's perspective, appropriately reflect and

accommodate local government plans, policies and directions, nor appropriately maintain local land use and priority setting decision making authority, or maintain an appropriate level of accountability between Council and its citizens.

The eleven recommendations adopted by Council and forwarded to the Metro Vancouver Board at that time were intended to improve the acceptability and relevance of the draft and address specific areas of City concern with regard to key aspects of the *draft RGS*. The submission to the Board from the City echoed some of the key elements identified in an earlier 2008 March position presented by the City and highlighted remaining fundamental issues to be resolved in order to achieve an acceptable level of consensus between the City and the Region. These included needed agreement on the:

- adoption of a policy based approach based on key regional designations, directions, guidelines and actions for ***recommended implementation*** by municipalities, rather than the proposed regional regulatory approach at the parcel level, to which municipalities must strictly comply;
- provision of necessary permitted discretion for municipalities to define the form, density, character and function of individual city centres in relation to their defined roles and local context as specified in their existing OCP and RCS;
- amended guidelines and descriptions for land use categories that recognize the concerns outlined, specifically in relation to Industrial, Frequent Transit Development Corridors, Urban Centres, Urban and “Green Zone lands”;
- amended approach for an industrial land reserve at a policy level;
- appropriate accommodation of additional designated Business Centre areas;
- amendment of the current requirement for local governments to implement all 75 listed municipal actions to ***“recommended implementation actions and opportunities”*** instead of mandated commitments;
- the limitation of land use reviews by TransLink as a general third approval body in the *draft RGS* to consulting on those major developments that are proposed for locations and purposes outside the terms and scope as defined in a City’s OCP and RCS;
- provision of ample opportunity for a collaborative review process to allow member municipalities to assess the methodology used to develop population, dwelling unit and employment projections, comment on the appropriateness of the underlying assumptions and develop municipal responses as to the acceptability, achievability and implications from a municipal perspective prior to finalization of the drafting process; and,
- provision of ample opportunity to review and amend maps associated with the proposed land use designations and categories in the *draft RGS*.

The requested appropriate response to these items of concern was necessary to properly reflect and accommodate local government plans, policies and directions,

while at the same time to adequately respond to the pursuit of desired regional goals and objectives.

## 2.2 Draft Regional Growth Strategy – 2009 November

As a result of its consultation process with its member municipalities, other agencies and jurisdictions and the general public, Metro Vancouver prepared an updated (2009 November) draft of the *Metro Vancouver 2040: Shaping Our Future* document (*draft RGS*). Once again, the Metro Vancouver Board referred this revised document for review and comment to affected local governments, provincial and federal governments and their agencies, school districts, health regions, business groups, non-profit organizations and community groups, as well as to others who previously commented on the strategy.

The contents of this updated draft was somewhat disappointing as it did not address many of the key issues and areas of concern contained in the City's 2009 March submission. At its meeting of 2010 January 18, Council adopted the recommendations of a staff report providing the City's response to the proposals contained in the updated *draft RGS*. This report put particular emphasis on the City's previously stated concerns and dealt with municipal implications associated with the new approaches established in the *draft RGS* dealing with two general areas of concern: the Plan's proposed *regulatory framework* and the proposed *content* of the Plan. At that time, Council adopted 37 recommendations relating to the revised Strategy that were forwarded to the Metro Vancouver Board. These recommendations were comprehensive in nature and included both overall and specific assessments of the draft's proposals including the following:

- An overall assessment that the draft Strategy in its present form was not supportable as a basis for subsequent City acceptance and approval, and would require significant amendment and clarification;
- informing Metro Vancouver that the City still had serious concerns with the implications of the proposed regulatory framework within the *draft RGS*; and
- Identification of seven specific "Items of Significant Concern", sixteen "Specific Amendments, seven 'Specific Amendments", two areas needing "Clarifications" and two areas "Conditionally Supported".

Most of the areas of concern identified by the City related to the loss of autonomy in its land use and regulatory processes, particularly when change or new directions are considered appropriate in relation to the local context, uncertainty related to the future application of required regional interpretations and approvals and a significant potential loss of accountability between Council and its citizens on a range of issues. In addition, there were a number of items relating to the specific content of the Plan and the degree to which it accurately reflected the growth management objectives and regulatory approaches of the City. Items were identified needing amendment,

additions or clarifications to ensure that the City's adopted plans and regulatory processes were properly and adequately accommodated. Items of inter-municipal significance were also included. The report sought to ensure that the content of the *draft RGS* was completely compatible with City directions, designations and regulatory tools **before** it was approved by the City to avoid future approval issues associated with the subsequent submission of the City's required Regional Context Statement to the Metro Vancouver Board for its approval.

### **3.0 THE REVISED DRAFT STRATEGY – 2010 SEPTEMBER**

Following submission of the respondents' comments, a third new draft of the RGS was produced in April 2010. To respond to the numerous identified concerns associated with a significantly expanded Metro Vancouver regulatory role in land use matters across the region raised in the response to the 2009 November draft, the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC – generally municipal planning directors) was invited to work with regional staff on this matter. Specifically, they sought to address what should be the appropriate spheres of regional interest versus local interest within the RGS and how this should be reflected in the defined implementation process. Their challenge was to strike a balance between achieving legitimate regional interests and strategic objectives, while providing for desired local diversity, autonomy and discretion. A working group from TAC, including representation from TransLink, was formed and met during the period from 2010 April to the end of 2010 August. The resulting implementation framework in the September 2010 draft has been significantly altered and is more in keeping with the City's previous two submissions.


Amendments have also been made to the contents of the *draft RGS* that address many of the issues previously identified by the City. Notwithstanding, there are City issues remaining that have not been adequately responded to in the updated draft.

#### **3.1 The Updated Overall Regulatory and Implementation/Amendment Processes**

As previously indicated, affected local governments had considerable comments and concerns about the RGS implementation and amendment processes as proposed in the 2009 November draft. The processes were considered complex and lacked the ability of municipalities to make minor changes to land use designations without triggering a full RGS amendment process and Metro Vancouver Board approval. There was also considerable concern that the regional land use plan and associated processes would add an additional bureaucratic level in the land development process, and add time, expense and uncertainty to normal municipal review and approvals.

The new draft contains an improvement to the implementation and regulatory aspects of the RGS and contains a better reflection as to what is and is not "regionally significant". The TAC group's work is summarized below graphically and illustrates a sliding scale of those items and principles that are regionally significant, and those that are clearly local.

## Regional Growth Strategy Implementation Framework



PRINCIPLES	EXAMPLES	PROCEDURES
Legislative requirements or fundamental change to core goals/strategies.	Amend the goals of strategies; delete an entire goal; change the minor amendment process	2/3 Board Vote and acceptance by affected local governments
Region-wide significance for non-urban designations	Change Urban Containment Boundary or Agricultural designations	2/3 Board Vote and regional Public Hearing
Region-wide significance for urban designations	Large scale Industrial area designation change	50% +1 Board Vote, no regional Public Hearing
Small scale urban designation changes	Small scale Industrial area designation change, changes to Urban Centre boundaries	Official Community Plan change exempted from Regional Context Statement acceptance process
Local planning matter with no regional significance	Rezoning consistent with Official Community Plan	Official Community Plan matters, no Regional Context Statement reference required

**Figure 1 - Defining Regional Significance (RGS)**

At the time of implementation, there undoubtedly will be areas in the middle of the scale where differences of opinion may exist as to the degree of regional versus local concern (e.g., what constitutes a “small” or “large” scale change?). However, the key to this approach is that the degree of proposed regional involvement and local autonomy has been reflected in adjustments to the approval procedures associated with the Plan. The Strategy has been revised so that the more regionally significant an issue, the higher the degree of Metro Vancouver involvement, and conversely, the less regionally significant an issue, the less the Metro Vancouver involvement there will be in decision-making and approval process.

This new approach appears more workable than previous drafts and is more reflective of the direction of the changes requested in our previous submissions. Clarity provided and changes made include the following:

- No Regional Context Statement reference, nor Metro Vancouver Board involvement, is required on rezonings consistent with a municipality’s Official Community Plan.
- The previously included list of permitted uses within land use designations has been deleted to eliminate a “zoning bylaw” approach within the RGS allowing more local interpretation for appropriate uses.
- More flexibility is provided between municipal OCP’s and the RGS with



provision for identifying, if applicable, how the OCP and the RCS will be made consistent over time (strategy action 6.2.2).

- The Metro Vancouver Board will now accept a Regional Context Statement that is **generally** consistent with the RGS. The addition of the term “generally” now allows the Board the legal discretion to approve a municipality’s RCS, even if it doesn’t meet every defined aspect in the RGS, if, in the opinion of the Board, it is generally consistent with it (strategy action 6.2.4);
- New additional municipal flexibility to adjust the boundaries of land use designations within the Urban Containment Boundary if the municipality includes reference to such possible change in its RCS (strategy actions 6.2.5 and 6.2.6). More specifically, for sites that are one hectare or less, the municipality may re-designate “proximate” lands from one land use designation to another land use designation, if the re-designation does not result in the development of proximate sites where the aggregate area is greater than one hectare; and the aggregate area of land affected by all such re-designations does not exceed 2% of the municipality’s total lands within each applicable land use designation;
- For sites that are three hectares or less, the municipality may re-designate land from Mixed Employment or Industrial to General Urban land use designation (strategy action 6.2.5), if the site is located on the edge of an Industrial or Mixed Employment area and the developable portion of the site will be predominantly within 100 metres of an existing or approved rail rapid transit station on TransLink’s Frequent Transit Network; or from Industrial to Mixed Employment land use designation if the developable portion of the site will be predominantly within 250 metres of an existing or approved rail rapid transit station on TransLink’s Frequent Transit Network, provided that:
  - the re-designation does not impede direct rail, waterway, road or highway access for industrial users;
  - the re-designation does not result in the development of proximate sites where the aggregate area is greater than three hectares; and
  - the aggregate area of land affected does not exceed 2 percent of the municipality’s total lands within each applicable land use designation.

It is noted that the *draft RGS* uses the term “proximate” lands when referring to allowable re-designations under action 6.2.5. The term suggests some flexibility as it generally means “next”, “close” or very near” suggesting that lands near, but not necessarily immediately adjacent are eligible for re-designation.

- Municipalities are now allowed to include language in its Regional Context Statement that permits amendments to the municipality’s Official Community Plan to adjust the boundaries of its Urban Centres and Frequent Transit (strategy action 6.2.6) Development Areas in keeping with the applicable guidelines within the RGS.

- Defined adjustments to the boundaries of land use designations within the Urban Containment Boundary or the boundaries of Urban Centres and Frequent Transit Development Areas do not require an amendment to the Municipality's Regional Context Statement subject to including the appropriate language in its Regional Context Statement.

The *draft RGS* now contains three types of amendment categories. Type 1 relates to Major Amendments to the RGS and requires an affirmative two-thirds weighted vote of the Metro Vancouver Board and acceptance by all affected local governments. These include high-level items, such as the addition or deletion of Regional Growth Strategy goals or objectives and the proposed process for making amendments to the RGS. Type 2 Amendments also require two-third affirmative weighted vote of the Metro Vancouver Board and a regional public hearing. Examples of Type 2 amendments include amendments:

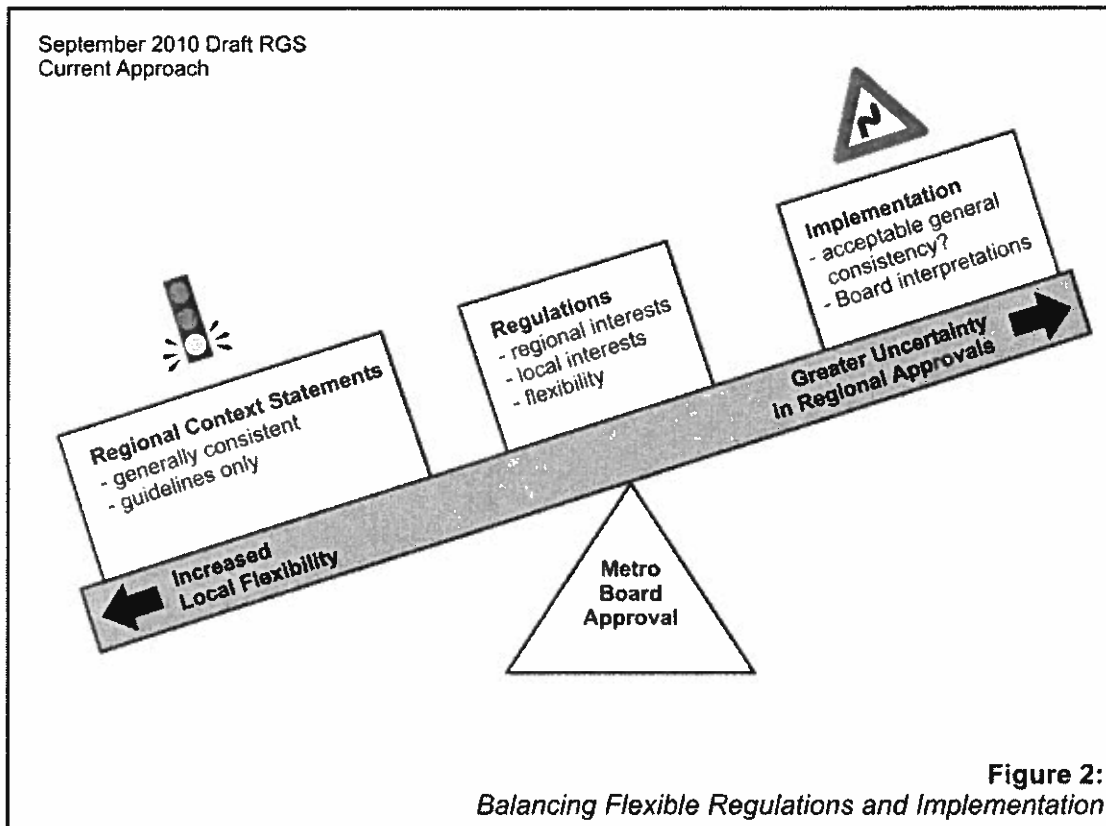
- to the Urban Containment Boundary
- to most Agricultural or Conservation and recreation land use designations
- from Rural land use designation to Industrial, Mixed Employment or General Urban
- to add or delete an Urban Centre
- to add, delete or amend descriptions of land use designations or actions under each strategy.

The third type of amendment category involves more minor amendments. This last category only requires a simple weighted vote of the Metro Vancouver Board and does not require a regional public hearing. Examples of Type 3 amendments include:

- the addition or deletion of a Frequent Transit Development Area location
- amendments from Industrial, Mixed Employment or General Urban land use designations to any other such land use designations
- amendments from Industrial, Mixed Employment or General Urban land use designations to Rural, Agricultural or Conservation and Recreation land use designations
- housekeeping amendments to population, dwelling unit and employment projections, housing demand estimates, performance measures, tables, figures, grammar or numbering and amendments to mapping to incorporate generally conforming maps included within Regional Context Statements.

In comparison with previous drafts of the RGS, strategy actions 6.2.4, 6.2.5 and 6.2.6 improve the flexibility of local municipalities to deal with minor adjustments to land use designation boundaries as contained within the RGS without triggering a formal amendment process requiring Metro Vancouver involvement and approval. While clearly diminishing existing local autonomy in dealing with all City land use and associated regulatory matters, the proposed Metro Vancouver regulatory and

implementation role in the *draft RGS* represents a less intervening regional approach at the local planning level in the balancing of local and regional interests. However, to a large degree that balancing has been achieved by providing greater flexibility in the implementation and amendment process by the introduction of language, such as “generally consistent”, “identify relationships”, “made consistent over time”, “approximate”, “guidelines only” and “housekeeping” amendments. As shown in *Figure 2* below, this has increased the apparent initial flexibility and discretion in favour of local municipalities, there is no question that the ultimate authority under the RGS framework in determining whether or not a local government’s RCS will be an acceptable response to the flexible language is the Metro Vancouver Board. In this regard, there has been a trade-off between introducing greater flexible language in the RGS to protect local interests at the expense of introducing greater uncertainty and greater latitude to the Metro Vancouver Board as the arbiter of that uncertainty.



Unlike most strategic plans, the RGS does not have an “exit” window that would occur when a scheduled major revision occurs every five years or so. In the event that the RGS implementation and amendment processes proved to be problematic for member municipalities at some point in the future, there would then need to be a Type 1 Major Amendment to address the issues requiring a two-thirds weighted majority of the Metro Vancouver Board and acceptance by all affected local governments.

### 3.2 Remaining Items to be Addressed

Staff are pleased to report that many of the issues and concerns expressed in Council's 2010 March submission to the Board dealing with content issues have been addressed to a degree considered generally acceptable. However, there are a number of issues and concerns that remain. It is a primary concern to City staff that any misunderstandings and differences in interpretation are kept to a minimum as once the Metro Vancouver Board adopts the RGS, it becomes the benchmark for all decisions relating to conformity with Regional Context Statements. The following items are presented with the intent in keeping any misunderstandings or discrepancies in interpretation to a minimum.

#### 3.2.1 Land Use Designation Boundaries

The *draft RGS* incorporates a land use framework to accommodate growth and development and involves the following:

- An Urban Containment Boundary where growth and development is to occur. The City of Burnaby in its entirety is located within the Urban Containment Boundary.
- Areas outside the Urban Containment Boundary generally have a non-urban designation with designations for Conservation & Recreation, Agricultural and Rural uses.
- Areas within the Urban Containment Boundary that have urban and non-urban designations for General Urban, Urban Centres, Mixed Employment, Industrial, Conservation and Recreation, and Agricultural land uses.

For Mixed Employment and Industrial areas, the proposed designation process requires municipalities to identify precise parcel-based boundaries, with small-scale boundary adjustments allowable, without triggering a formal amendment process, if consistent with the criteria outlined in Section 2 of this report. This parcel-based designation requirement is intended to help protect the erosion of these employment based economic areas to other general urban uses by municipality's having the latitude to make boundary adjustments to match more general locational boundaries.

For Urban Centres and Frequent Transit Development Areas, the *draft RGS* also requires a similar parcel-based designation. Staff believe that this level of detail at the regional level is not appropriate and are of the opinion that a locational, rather than a parcel-based guideline, would be more appropriate within the RGS. Changing land assembly, existing land use conditions and public attitudes all contribute to defining the strong local context linkage affecting Urban Centres and FTDA's. Such a change would allow for minor boundary adjustments (as long as the RGS guidelines for Urban Centres and FTDA's are being met) to

address changing local conditions without requiring formal amendment, or the required inclusion of the somewhat nebulous “future change” clauses within the RCS.

**Recommendation:**

***THAT Metro Vancouver be requested to amend the RGS to provide for a locational, rather than parcel-based designation for Urban Centre and Frequent Transit Development Areas.***

Strategy action 6.4.1 specifies who can apply for an amendment to the Regional Growth Strategy. It indicates that for a change to a land use designation, or Urban Containment Boundary location, such amendments can only be initiated by Metro Vancouver, or the municipality in which the subject site is located. While staff understand the need for this provision for dealing with unincorporated areas in which Metro Vancouver acts like a local government, it does not support the provision to potentially allow for Metro Vancouver initiated changes to municipal land use designations without the full support of the affected local municipality.

**Recommendation:**

***That Metro Vancouver be requested to amend strategy action 6.4.1 of the draft RGS to ensure that Metro Vancouver cannot initiate changes to municipal land use designations in the RGS without the full support of the affected local municipality.***

**3.2.2 Suburban Multi-Family Communities and Urban Villages in Burnaby’s Development Framework**

In our previous submission to the Board, Council had requested that the *draft RGS* policy statements be amended to reference that higher density residential development can appropriately be accommodated within the General Urban designation, outside of designated urban centres. This was in response to a proposed strategy (1.2.3) for General Urban areas that would “discourage higher density residential development outside of Frequent Transit Development Corridors and Urban Centres” and “support densities that are lower than those in Urban Centres and Frequent Transit Development Corridors and encourage ground-oriented residential development”.

This request was intended to deal with the fact that Burnaby’s long-standing urban structure (and adopted Official Community Plan) includes the accommodation of thirteen Urban Village areas (e.g., Monticeto, Hastings Village at Burnaby Heights, Holdom and Bainbridge Station Areas, Royal Oak/Rumble, Sixth Street and SFU E. Neighbourhood Centres). As well, the City’s

OCP makes provision for eight suburban multi-family communities in areas, such as the Oaklands, SFU South Neighbourhood, and Cariboo Heights. Each of the community plans for these areas define the density, form and location of these multi-family communities intended to broaden the scope of housing choices within the community. The densities are variable, but in some instances can reach up to RM4 densities or approximately 60 units per acre. As these areas involve “higher density” residential development, from a local Burnaby context, it was previously emphasized that the City will be encouraging, rather than discouraging, higher density residential development in these areas.

The response received from Metro Vancouver to our previous recommendations to the Board to ensure that higher density residential development within the City’s designated Urban Villages and Suburban Multi-Family Communities can be appropriately accommodated under the General Urban designation which reads as follows:

*“The intent statement for General Urban Areas reads: “Within the General Urban area, generally higher trip-generating development is to be directed to Urban Centres and Frequent Transit Development Areas”. Policy 1.2.6 d) ii reads “direct development densities to General Urban areas that are generally lower than those in Urban Centres and Frequent Transit Development Areas”. This is core to the entire philosophy of the plan. The terms “Urban Villages and Neighbourhood Centres are not regional terms, but if significantly higher densities are considered for these areas then they should be examined to see if they meet the regional definition of either Urban Centres or Frequent Transit Development Areas. If not, the decision to go significantly higher densities would likely warrant careful reconsideration”*

This response did not reduce the uncertainty concerning the ability to adequately accommodate these development areas under the General Urban designation within the City’s Regional Context Statement. The current draft RGS still contains language that, if applied literally, could pose issues at the time of the submission and approval of the City’s RCS. On page 7 of the draft, it is indicated that “within General Urban areas, higher density trip-generating development is to be directed to Urban Centres and Frequent Transit Development Areas”. Also on page 5 is the statement that “Frequent Transit Development Areas are intended to be additional priority locations to accommodate concentrated growth in higher density forms of development.” The text goes on to say that “Frequent Transit Development Areas complement the network of Urban Centres, and are characterized by higher density residential, commercial and mixed uses...”. These sentiments are reflected specifically in action 1.2.6 d) ii) which specifies that municipalities must adopt Regional Context Statements that include policies for General Urban Areas which “ direct development densities to General Urban areas that are generally

*lower than those in Urban Centres and Frequent Transit Development Areas”.*

While there is little question that the densities in the Urban Villages and Suburban Multi-Family areas are generally lower than most development in Urban Centres, the same cannot necessarily be said for Frequent Transit Development Areas as they are defined. Whether or nor the City decides to adopt the inclusion of Frequent Transit Development Areas (FTDA) within its development framework at the time of the development of its RCS is not known. While there are similarities between FTDA's and the City's Urban Village and Suburban Multi-Family Community designations, it may well be advantageous for the City to stay with its existing designations that are accepted in the community and have gone through public review and approval processes.

The only area where this issue may be addressed could be Goal 4 (Development Complete Communities) action 4.2.4 h) which states “*where appropriate, identify local centres that provide a mix of housing types, local-serving commercial activities and good access to transit*”. This would likely require the designation of the 21 Urban Villages and Suburban Multi-Family Communities within the City on Map 11: Local Centres, Hospitals and Post Secondary Institutions within the RGS. However, this map relates primarily to the location of facilities for healthy and complete communities, rather than being a component of the region's residential development framework.

To ensure that there are no misunderstandings in this regard in the future, especially at the time of the preparation, submission and Metro Vancouver Board approval of the City's RCS, Council should repeat the request that either the *draft RGS* be appropriately amended, in consultation with City staff, to accommodate Burnaby's existing residential and Commercial Policy Framework, specifically Urban Villages and Suburban Multi-Family Communities, or alternatively, Metro Vancouver provide written assurances that these elements can be accommodated within the General Urban designation within the *draft RGS*. Until either occurs, staff are unable to recommend support for strategy action 1.2.6 d) ii.

**Recommendations:**

***THAT Council request that Metro Vancouver, in consultation with City staff, either appropriately amend the draft RGS to accommodate Burnaby's existing residential and Commercial Policy Framework, specifically Urban Villages and Suburban Multi-Family Communities within the General Urban designation, or alternatively provide written assurances that these elements can be accommodated within the General Urban designation within the draft RGS.***

### 3.2.3 Role of Mixed Employment Areas

Included in the City's previous submission to the Board was a Council adopted recommendation as follows:

*"THAT Council advise Metro Vancouver that the City does not support the policy guidelines for Mixed Employment areas as currently presented in Strategy 2.1 of the draft RGS, and that amendments are required to clarify that the regional designation would allow for the future intended development of these lands consistent with the guidelines and uses established within Council adopted Community Plans and OCP."*

While some improvement has occurred in the language associated with this designation, there remains a dichotomy and a lack of clarity within the *draft RGS* with respect to Mixed Employment Areas being designated as one of the focus areas for employment growth in the region. On the one hand, Mixed Employment Areas are included in the *draft RGS* "for industrial, commercial and other employment related uses ... to meet the needs of the regional economy". As such, they appear as legitimate development areas with their projected uses and development forms guided by adopted municipal community plans. Yet, at the same time, under action 2.2.4, municipalities are being required to specifically include policies for Mixed Employment Areas in their Regional Context Statements that "support the regional objective of concentrating office, retail and other high trip generating uses in Urban Centres and existing or planned Frequent Transit Development Areas". This sends an ambiguous mixed message about the legitimacy of Mixed Employment Areas and their intended development that will lead to possible misinterpretations and misunderstandings in the future.

In our previous submission, it was clearly noted that the City of Burnaby plans to encourage the transformation of its Business Centres for the employment uses intended as set out in their associated guide plans. Having said that, the City strongly supports and encourages the continued development of office space within its Town Centres. The maximum density provisions for office development within the City's Zoning Bylaw are significant and are restricted for use **only** within our designated Regional and Municipal Town Centres. Generally, the allowable maximum densities for office development within the City's Town Centres are **six times higher** than those permitted within the City's Mixed Employment Areas.

Rather than including policies within the Mixed Employment Areas in the support of general, somewhat ambiguous regional objectives for other areas, it would be preferable and less prone to future misunderstandings, to instead introduce reference to requiring significant density differentials between Mixed Employment Areas and Urban Centres. This could likely be best achieved by



including Mixed Employment Areas into **Table 2**, along with density and any other desired criteria under the “*Description and Land Use Characteristics*” heading.

It would also be appropriate in relation to the above to amend the wording of strategy action 2.1.4 b) by inserting the phrase “*higher density*” in the first line before the words “*office space*”.

**Recommendation:**

***THAT a policy based on a density differential between Mixed Employment Areas and Urban Centres be included as a defining criteria for Mixed Employment Areas and be included as an element within Table 2 of the document;***

***THAT Metro Vancouver be requested to amend strategy action 2.1.4 b) by inserting the phrase “higher density” in the first line before the words “office space in Urban Centres”.***

**3.2.4 Population, Dwelling Unit and Employment Projections**

Strategy action 1.1.3 b) stipulates that municipalities are to adopt Regional Context Statements that “*provide municipal population, dwelling unit and employment projections, with reference to guidelines contained in Table A.1 (Appendix A, attached), and demonstrate how municipal plans will accommodate the projected growth within the Urban Containment Boundary*”. This requirement was included within the previous draft and prompted a response from the City that whether these expectations are realistic or not at the municipal level, which would need to be determined through a comprehensive “ground up” analysis of various potential development and growth opportunities throughout the City as part of the City’s update of its Official Community Plan and Regional Context Statement. Notwithstanding the City’s previous indicated concern with the language stating the need to “*demonstrate how municipal plans will accommodate* (emphasis added) *Metro Vancouver’s projected growth*”, this same requirement exists within the current *draft RGS*. Without restating our points made in our previous submission on this matter, it would be appropriate for action 1.1.3 b) to have a revision from “... *demonstrate how municipal plans will accommodate Metro Vancouver’s projected growth...*” to “*demonstrate how municipal plans will work towards accommodating Metro Vancouver’s projected growth ...*”.

**Recommendation:**

***THAT Metro Vancouver be requested to amend the requirement for Regional Context Statements to provide population, dwelling unit and employment***

***projections, as currently presented in strategy action 1.1.3 b) of the draft RGS from “...demonstrate how municipal plans will accommodate Metro Vancouver’s projected growth” to “...demonstrate how municipal plans will work towards accommodating Metro Vancouver’s projected growth ...”.***

Strategy action 1.2.6 a) requires municipalities to adopt regional growth Strategies which “provide dwelling unit and employment projections that indicate the municipal share of planned growth and that contribute to achieving the regional share of growth for Urban Centres and Frequent Transit Development Areas as set out in Table 1 ...).” Mixed Employment Areas are not included as a designated employment area within Table 1 that provides for the projected distribution of employment in the region. Staff are not able to speak to the intended distribution of employment in other communities, but within the City of Burnaby, the OCP projects employment growth in our Business Centres (generally aligned with the region’s Mixed Employment Areas) increasing from about 19,900 in 1996 to approximately 48,400 by 2021. While understanding the Strategy’s intent to strengthen the relative roles of Urban Centres and Frequent Transit Development Areas in employment growth, mixed Employment Areas, (and possibly Industrial Areas) should be included as a land use designation category within Table 1 (Employment) in keeping with their intended role within the RGS as a legitimately defined development area for employment. Strategy actions 1.2.4, 1.2.6 should also be amended to reflect the intended role of Mixed Employment Areas as employment centres.

**Recommendation:**

***THAT Metro Vancouver be requested to include Mixed Employment Areas as a land use category within the Employment component of Table 1 in keeping with the intended status of these lands within the RGS.***

***THAT strategy actions 1.2.4 and 1.2.6 and the appropriate performance measures in Section G be amended to reflect the intended role of Mixed Employment Areas as employment centres.***

**3.2.5 Municipal Affordable Housing Policies**

Strategy 4.1 dealing with affordable housing choices has been altered to reflect the fact that municipalities are limited in their financial resources, mandates and operating priorities to pursue and implement the primary responses the affordable housing needs. The Strategy places greater emphasis on the federal and provincial governments to provide incentives to stimulate private sector investment in rental housing and to provide needed capital and operating funding to support the construction of additional affordable, supportive and transitional housing across the region. Notwithstanding the greater emphasis on senior government involvement in the Strategy, action 4.1.6 a) requires

municipalities to adopt Regional Context Statements which “include policies or strategies that indicate how municipalities **will meet** (emphasis added) the estimated future housing demand as set out in Tables A.2 and A.3 ...”. Given the inability (or desire) of local municipalities to unilaterally deliver affordable housing stock, it would be appropriate for the wording in action 4.1.6 a) to be amended to read “...how municipalities **will work towards** (emphasis added) the estimated future housing demand ...”.

It is also noted that in the *draft RGS*, that while municipalities are still required to prepare and implement Housing Action Plans, these plans no longer have to be included within a municipality’s Regional Context Statement.

**Recommendation:**

***THAT Metro Vancouver be requested to amend the wording requiring that Regional Context Statements include policies or strategies that indicate how municipalities will address future housing demand as currently presented in strategy actions 4.1.6 a) from “...how municipalities will meet the estimated future housing demand as set out in Tables A.2 and A.3” to “...how municipalities will work towards meeting the estimated future housing demand as set out in Tables A.2 and A.3...” to better reflect the inability of local municipalities to unilaterally deliver affordable housing stock.***

**3.2.6 Regional Recreation Greenway Connection**

Our previous submission to Metro Vancouver proposed an amendment to the Regional Recreation Greenway Network to include the Burnaby Fraser Foreshore connection with Vancouver and New Westminister connections and the extension of the Trans-Canada Trail westward from Burnaby into the City of Vancouver. The Trans-Canada trail extension into Vancouver was added, but the Fraser Foreshore connection to Vancouver and New Westminister was not. Given that a similar request has been made by the City of Vancouver, it would be appropriate to restate the request to include the Fraser Foreshore Greenway connection.

**Recommendation:**

***THAT Metro Vancouver be requested to amend Map 9 (Regional Recreation Greenway Network) of the draft RGS to include the Burnaby Fraser Foreshore Greenway to connect with the City of Vancouver and City of New Westminister Fraser Foreshore Greenways.***

### **3.2.7 Monitoring and Performance Measures**

Metro Vancouver intends to prepare an annual report on progress made in meeting the goals of the Regional Growth Strategy and has identified fifty-three specific items to be measured in relation to the Strategy's five goals. No mention is made of the systems or data sources required to assemble this material, but it assumed that the responsibility rests with Metro Vancouver staff.

Our previous submission dealt with a monitoring and performance assessment measure considered missing. The City had proposed including a "satisfaction" measure of local municipalities with regard to their working relationship with the RGS on an annual basis as an indication of the overall workability of the plan. The response received by the City from Metro Vancouver suggests that the idea may have merit from their statement that *"the inclusion of a section setting out individual municipality's assessment on how well the RGS is working for them and a regional assessment on how well individual municipality's are responding to the challenge of meeting both local and regional goals could be considered"*. While this acknowledgment has been made, no reference is made to such a performance measure being included. Staff still believe the inclusion of such an overall "satisfaction performance measure" within the RGS would have merit.

#### **Recommendation:**

***THAT Metro Vancouver include a "satisfaction" measure from local municipalities with regard to their working relationship with the RGS on an annual basis as one of the Performance Measures to be included within the RGS.***

### **4.0 MAPS FOR CITY LAND USE DESIGNATIONS IN THE RGS**

In the interests of clarity and completeness, it would be beneficial for the City to submit the most up-to-date maps for the various land use designations to the Metro Vancouver Board prior to the adoption of the RGS bylaw. Appendix 1 to this report provides a summary definition of the City's boundaries for its General Urban, Mixed Employment, Industrial, Agricultural and Conservation and Recreation lands for designation within the RGS. Supplementary detailed maps for each category will be provided directly to Metro Vancouver staff at the time of the conveyance of this report.

#### **Recommendation:**

***THAT Council submit Appendix 1 of this report to Metro Vancouver as the definition of the City's boundaries for its Urban Centres, General Urban, Mixed Employment, Industrial, Agricultural and Conservation and Recreation lands for designation within the RGS.***

## **5.0 THE RGS IMPLEMENTATION – NEXT STEPS**

It is anticipated that the Metro Vancouver staff will have a new draft of the RGS as of 2010 October 29. This will be the bylaw version that is to go to the Regional Planning Committee and then to the 2010 November 12 Board meeting for first and second reading. This updated version is to incorporate the feedback from municipalities (including this report) received during the latest consultation period. Following first and second reading, the associated Public Hearing is to be on four nights in four venues within the region. If there are remaining issues in the RGS, municipalities may comment at the Public Hearing, allowing the bylaw to be amended in response to the comments received at the Public Hearing. After the Public Hearing is terminated, the RGS will be sent to affected municipalities for ratification, the local governments having 60 days to respond. It should be noted that once the post Public Hearing RGS is sent to municipalities for acceptance, the ability to make subsequent changes becomes problematic, since the bylaw is sent out simultaneously to 25 affected local governments for acceptance.

When the RGS is adopted, it will not legally apply to municipalities, as they will have two years to adopt a revised OCP which contains a revised Regional Context Statement that will need to be submitted to the Metro Vancouver Board for approval that it is “generally consistent” with the RGS. In the interim two year period, each municipality is requested to seek comment from the Metro Vancouver Board on proposed amendments to that municipality’s OCP which are inconsistent with the RGS (strategy action 6.2.11).

If changes are still considered required, the only option would appear to be through the submission of a municipality’s Regional Context Statement and subsequent Board approval through the specified plan amendment process.

The above reinforces the need to ensure the appropriate changes requested are made prior to first and second reading and/or the termination of the required Public Hearing.

## **6.0 SUMMARY**

In considering the implications associated with the new approaches established in the *draft RGS*, the City has addressed two primary areas of concern in its previous submissions to Metro Vancouver Board. The first related to the new adoption and amendment procedures associated with the RGS and the resultant loss of autonomy in managing the City’s growth management and land use affairs. The second area relates to certain strategies and actions that will need to be responded to in the municipalities’ preparation and submission of their Regional Context Statements.

In response to the first area of concern, our previous submissions expressed support for a federation of municipalities approach that advanced defined regional strategies and directions through their respective planning and land use decisions. This

respected the ability of local Councils to consider the regional consequences of their decisions, while at the same time allowing the necessary flexibility and judgment in local decision-making.

This partnership approach has **not been** pursued in the most recent version of the *draft RGS*. However, as outlined in this report, there have been improvements to the regulatory side of the RGS with a greater degree of flexibility and latitude provided to municipalities in relation to the preparation and approval of their Regional Context Statements. The same approach has been incorporated within the RGS amendment process. Nevertheless, the introduction of greater flexible language in the RGS to help protect local interests has been at the expense of increasing the level of uncertainty as to what will be deemed “generally consistent”, or not, with the Metro Vancouver Board deciding whether or not a local government’s RCS will be an acceptable response to the more flexible language in the RGS.

This reality further emphasizes the need for municipalities to remove as much uncertainty and potential for misunderstandings or misinterpretations to a minimum in relation to the policies and actions within the RGS that will have to be responded to in the municipalities’ RCS’s. This has been the basis for the resubmission of the content items contained in Section 3.2 of this report.

There is an extremely ambitious timeline set for the adoption of the RGS with the proposal that, on 2010 October 29, there will be a special meeting of the Regional Planning Committee in advance of referring the Regional Growth Strategy Bylaw for first and second reading to the Metro Vancouver (GVRD) Board on 2010 November 12. It is considered crucial that the City receive a response to the items raised in this report, with an indication of the willingness to accommodate the requested changes, prior to the Public Hearing being held for the Growth Strategy Bylaw.

With the appropriate resolution of the items listed in Section 3.2 of this report, staff would be in a position to recommend general acceptance of the *draft RGS* as the basis for subsequent City approval. It is acknowledged that the Metro Vancouver Board has the ultimate authority in determining whether a submitted Regional Context Statement is, or is not, “generally consistent” with the RGS. At this stage, it is a matter of judgement that the RGS plan and subsequent processes will provide for the intended flexibility in the preparation, adoption and subsequent amendment of the City’s Regional Context Statement to help protect both local and regional interests. It is staff’s view that the proposed approach is sufficient, genuine and worthy of support in the interests of moving forward with the Regional Growth Strategy. Subject to the appropriate resolution of the items listed in Section 3.2 of this report, staff would be in a position to recommend general acceptance of the *draft RGS* as the basis for subsequent City approval.

**Recommendation:**

***THAT Metro Vancouver be informed that subject to the appropriate resolution of the items listed in Section 3.2 of this report, the City would be in a position to provide general acceptance of the draft RGS as the basis for subsequent City approval.***

***THAT this report be sent to Metro Vancouver in response to the 2010 September draft RGS.***

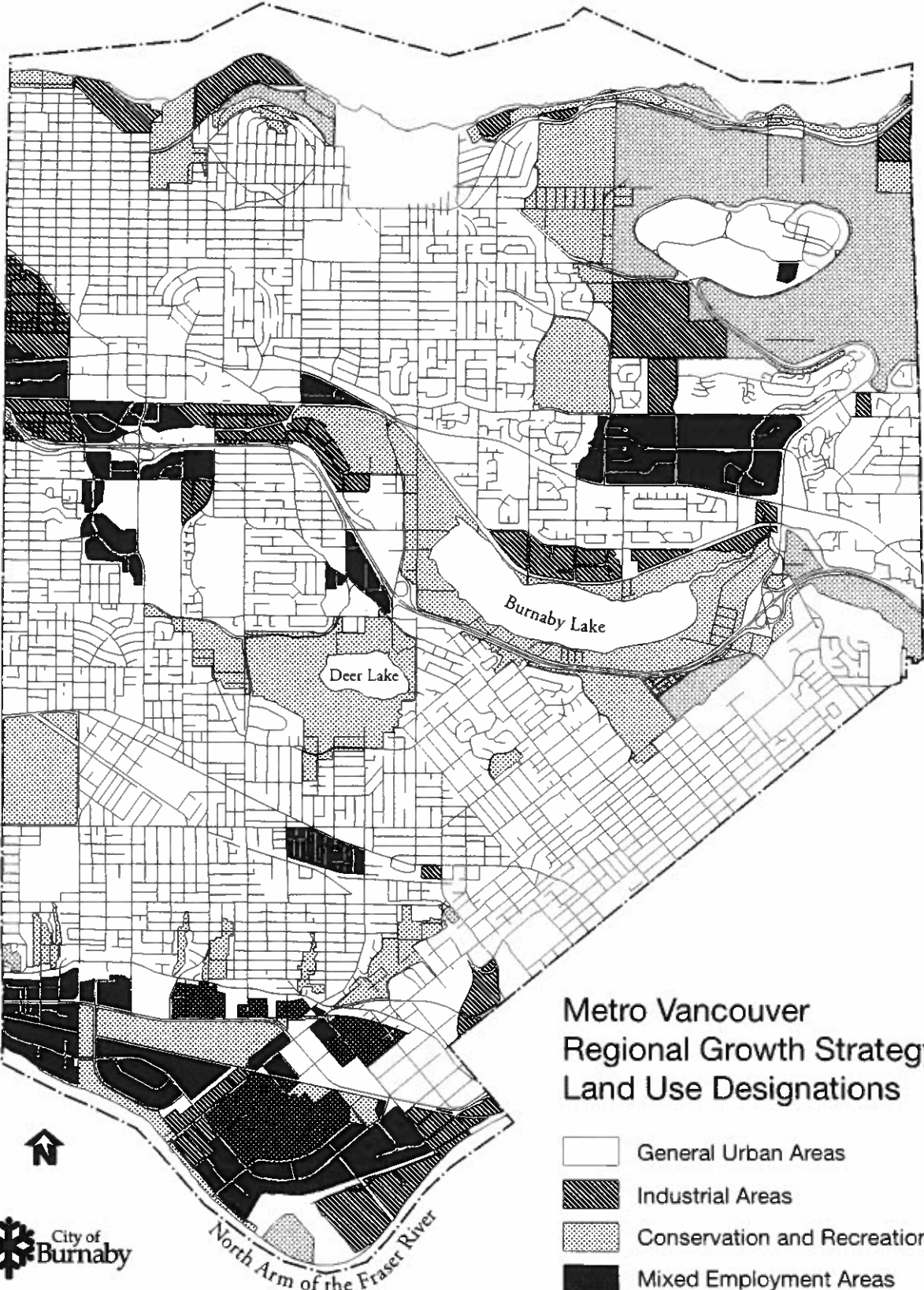


B. Luksun, Director  
PLANNING AND BUILDING

JSB/LP:jc:sa  
Attachment

cc: Deputy City Manager  
Director Engineering  
Director Finance  
Director Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services  
Fire Chief  
OIC RCMP  
Chief Librarian  
City Solicitor  
City Clerk

BURRARD INLET



**Metro Vancouver  
Regional Growth Strategy  
Land Use Designations**

-  General Urban Areas
-  Industrial Areas
-  Conservation and Recreation Areas
-  Mixed Employment Areas
-  Agricultural Areas