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**TO:** CITY MANAGER **DATE:** 2011 February 21

**FROM:** DIRECTOR PLANNING AND BUILDING **FILE:** 71000 01  
*Reference: Metro Vanc RGS Bylaw*

**SUBJECT:** REGIONAL GROWTH STRATEGY, BYLAW NO. 1136, 2010  
(METRO VANCOUVER 2040: SHAPING OUR FUTURE)

**PURPOSE:** To respond to the request from the Metro Vancouver Board for the City to either accept or reject its Regional Growth Strategy Bylaw No. 1136, 2010 (Metro Vancouver 2040: Shaping Our Future).

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**RECOMMENDATION:**

1. **THAT** Council advise the Metro Vancouver Board that, in accordance with Section 857 of the Local Government Act, the City of Burnaby accepts the Regional Growth Strategy as contained in Regional Growth Strategy Bylaw No. 1136, 2010 (Metro Vancouver 2040: Shaping Our Future).

**REPORT****1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Under the provisions of the Local Government Act, regional districts are required to prepare a Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) to establish a land use management framework for the region. The RGS must cover a period of at least 20 years, and include a comprehensive statement on the future of the region, including social, economic, and environmental objectives; population and employment projections; and actions proposed with regard to housing, transportation, regional services, parks and natural areas, and economic development.

The current RGS for Metro Vancouver, the Liveable Region Strategic Plan, was adopted by the then GVRD Board in 1996 and has been undergoing a comprehensive review by Metro Vancouver for some time. The subject RGS Strategy Bylaw No. 1136, 2010 (Metro Vancouver 2040: Shaping our Future), is intended to replace the 1996 document as the new regional land use strategic framework.

On 2010 November 12, the Metro Vancouver Board gave first and second readings to Greater Vancouver RGS Bylaw No. 1136, 2010 and referred it to a Public Hearing. A record of the Public Hearing including the minutes and the written submissions were presented to the Board in a report dated 2011 January 04. On 2011 January 14, the Board considered the report on the results of the Public Hearing input that included a number of recommended amendments to the RGS Bylaw emanating from the Public Hearing process.

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As a result of its considerations, the Metro Vancouver Board incorporated the recommended amendments by rescinding second reading of the Bylaw, approving the proposed amendments, and giving second reading of the Bylaw as amended. None of the amendments made, which were minor in nature, are considered to materially alter the Bylaw's affect on the City of Burnaby.

As noted below, following second reading of the Bylaw, Metro Vancouver has referred the Bylaw to local governments for acceptance. The RGS document has been provided to members of Council under separate cover, and is available to the public at the Planning and Building Department and through Metro Vancouver or on their website at [www.metrovancouver.org/planning/development/strategy](http://www.metrovancouver.org/planning/development/strategy). This report responds to the Region's request for the City response to the RGS Bylaw.

## **2.0 PROCESS OF ACCEPTANCE BY AFFECTED LOCAL GOVERNMENTS**

As set out in Section 857 of the Local Government Act, the next step in the adoption of the RGS Bylaw is to submit it to Metro Vancouver's "affected local governments". The term "affected local governments" is defined in the Act, and for Metro Vancouver, includes:

- the Council of each municipality, all or part of which is covered by the regional growth strategy;
- the Tsawwassen First Nation;
- the board of directors of the South Coast British Columbia Transportation Authority (TransLink); and
- the board of each regional district that is adjoining an area to which the regional growth strategy is to apply (Squamish-Lillooet Regional District and the Fraser Valley Regional District).

These affected local governments have 60 days to respond from the time of formal notification of the Board's referral of 2010 January 21. Under the prevailing legislation, this established the date of 2011 March 22 as the end of the 60 day response period. The Act also requires that the RGS Bylaw be submitted to the Provincial Minister of Community, Sports & Cultural Development for information purposes only.

On receipt of the proposed regional growth strategy under subsection (3) of the legislation, each affected local government must, in accordance with Section 857 of the Local Government Act:

- (a) review the regional growth strategy in the context of any official community plans and regional growth strategies for its jurisdiction, both those that are current and those that are in preparation, and in the context of any other matters that affect its jurisdiction, and
- (b) subject to an extension under section 858 (3), within 60 days of receipt either (i) accept the regional growth strategy, or (ii) respond, by resolution, to the proposing board indicating that the local government refuses to accept the regional growth strategy. If the affected local government refuses to accept, then it must indicate the provisions to which it objects, and reasons for its objections. If an affected local government does not respond within the 60-day period, it is deemed to have accepted the RGS.

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At the conclusion of the 60-day acceptance period, the Metro Vancouver Board will be informed of the status of the acceptances. If all affected local governments have accepted the RGS, then the Board will be asked to consider final adoption of the Bylaw. If one or more affected local governments refuse to accept, then the Board must notify the minister, who will then set in motion the settlement process which will focus on and resolve the issues raised by the non-accepting municipalities. If there are resulting changes to the RGS as a result of the settlement process, then these changes may be subject to an acceptance process by all affected local governments. If there are no changes as a result of the settlement process, the RGS can then be given final reading. Until all affected local governments have accepted the RGS, or, if one party has refused to accept, the RGS bylaw cannot be adopted by the Board.

### **3.0 REVISION OF OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLANS AND REGIONAL CONTEXT STATEMENTS**

Within two years of the Metro Vancouver Board's final adoption of the RGS, each municipality must include a Regional Context Statement (RCS) within its Official Community Plan (OCP), and submit the RCS to the Metro Vancouver Board for acceptance.

The purpose of the RCS is to identify the relationship between the OCP and the goals, strategies and actions identified in the RGS. If applicable, the RCS will identify how the OCP will be made consistent with the RCS over time. In considering acceptance of a municipality's RCS, the Board will expect that the RCS is "generally consistent" with the goals, strategies and actions of the RGS and the parcel-based regional land use designations depicted in Map 2 of the RGS.

The Metro Vancouver Board must accept or decline the RCS from each municipality by a simple majority weighted vote within 120 days of its submission. If a RCS is declined, the Regional Board must specify which provisions are not acceptable and the reasons for the Board's objection.

It is also noted that from the time that the Metro Vancouver Board adopts the RGS bylaw until the first time the Board accepts a municipality's RCS, each municipality is requested to seek comment from the Board on proposed amendments to that municipality's OCP that may be inconsistent with the RGS.

Once the Board approves the RCS, any subsequent amendments to the municipal OCP must be consistent with the approved RCS; otherwise an amendment or new RCS is required to be submitted to the Board for approval. Within the City, zoning of property must, in turn, be consistent with the City's OCP. If a municipality proposes an amendment to its OCP in a way that will affect the RCS, the municipality must consult with Metro Vancouver before proceeding with the OCP amendment. The following apply to all proposed RCS amendments:

- All proposed amendments to a municipal RCS must be submitted to Metro Vancouver prior to the municipal public hearing, and must be accepted by the Metro Vancouver Board by a simple majority weighted vote.
- Amendments to a RCS, for example to change designations within the Urban area, require a simple majority weighted vote (50% +1) of the Metro Vancouver Board.

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- RCS Amendments to add Frequent Transit Development Corridors must be accompanied by formal comments from TransLink.
- Amendments to a RCS, regarding lands designated Agricultural or Conservation and Recreation, lands outside of the Urban Containment Boundary, or amendments to add or delete an urban centre, must obtain an Amendment to the RGS before the municipality can seek amendment to its RCS. These amendments would require 2/3 majority-weighted vote by the Metro Vancouver Board (an exception is when land that has been excluded from the ALR is proposed for industrial use and is contiguous with the Urban Containment boundary).

While the proposed RGS is more detailed and integrated, with stronger linkages to municipal OCP's and RCS's than the current regional growth strategy (LRSP), the RGS presented does provide for significantly increased flexibility for municipalities in comparison with previous draft versions prepared over the past years. Specifically, the approach retains local jurisdiction over the zoning bylaw and rezoning process; allows for amendments to the RGS through acceptance of changes to a RCS; and provides for flexibility in the Board's acceptance of RCS that are 'generally consistent' with the RGS. This approach provides municipalities with more flexibility for policy interpretation and for Board acceptance of a municipal RCS, with a requirement of only a majority (50% +1) vote, rather than the 2/3 majority vote required for most amendments to the RGS.

#### **4.0 THE REGIONAL GROWTH STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT PROCESS**

Achieving a general consensus in the development of a RGS amongst twenty-two regional communities has been a challenging task for the Region. While this process could be expected to have some deficiencies and highlight differences in opinion resulting from its development, it nevertheless, does provide a regional planning framework expected to yield benefits that otherwise would not be achieved in the absence of the commonly accepted strategy for management of growth in the region. The current RGS document, which is the result of extensive input and consultation, particularly over the past 12 months, does provide an acceptable context within which the City of Burnaby's existing growth management approach, as defined in its OCP, can co-exist and continue to contribute to the betterment of the City and the region as a whole.

During the development of the current RGS document, the primary source of difference between the Region and some local governments, has related to the significant challenge in resolving their differing perspectives in relation to:

- how the region could appropriately strengthen its regulatory role to be able to deliver on the vision and promises contained in a regional plan;
- how to maintain the primary role of local government in managing land use change in relation to a strengthened regional regulatory framework;
- how to ensure the integrity of local community direction from both residents and Councils in community development; and
- how to best establish and maintain an acceptable level of efficiency, certainty and simplicity in the development approval processes.

Throughout the process of developing the current RGS document, there were a number of key issues identified that were referred back to the Region from Council to ensure that the new strategy:

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- provided a clear identification of roles and responsibilities for local government and regional government and ensured protection of local autonomy and accountability in land use planning matters;
- restricted regional involvement to those matters of having significant regional interest;
- minimized the need for competing interpretations of permitted land uses;
- maintained local jurisdiction over zoning bylaws, and the related development approvals process; and
- removed uncertainty from the proposed administration process and reduced the potential for future misinterpretations and misunderstandings.

The above issues and somewhat difficult process to reach an acceptable mutual position, however, does not diminish the fact that from a broader planning view, our Council and City has had a long tradition of supporting sound regional planning.

Burnaby was a founding member of the Lower Mainland Regional Planning Board in 1949. A clear regional perspective was also reflected in the management of Burnaby's civic planning strategies and the development of the City's first OCP adopted in 1987. This OCP recognized our role and responsibilities to manage growth both for local and regional benefits. Also, the City's current OCP adopted in 1998 committed to the four strategic goals contained in the 1996 Livable Region Strategic Plan to:

- Protect the Green Zone;
- Build Complete Communities;
- Achieve a compact Metropolitan region; and
- Increase Transportation Choice.

Building on this foundation, the City has always agreed with the need for a RGS with a clear vision for the future to help mitigate the direct impacts of poorly planned regional growth, and to deliver the resulting benefits to our community in terms of objectives for new development, employment, tax base improvements, and its quality of life.

It is from this dual perspective of significant concern with the impact on local planning decisions of a potential regional zoning approach, and our commitment to Regional Planning, that the City provided four formal reports to the Region in response to the various working drafts of the new RGS. As such, the City has been an active participant in the difficult discussions surrounding the primary issues and points of conflict between local autonomy in land use decisions; broader Regional objectives; and the range of perspectives in between.

In comparison to the regional planning framework established in the Livable Region Strategic Plan, which was based on a broad consensus approach with virtually no regulatory control, the current RGS does intrude somewhat more on local planning authority. Nevertheless, the most recent RGS document substantially addressed the City's previous concerns and resulted in the creation of a regional plan that incorporates some future accountability amongst local governments at the regional level.

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## **5.0 OVERVIEW OF THE NEW REGIONAL GROWTH STRATEGY**

The proposed RGS is centered on five broad goals together with fourteen accompanying strategies that define the land use and growth management approach to be followed in addressing the anticipated regional growth between 2006 and 2041 of 1.2 million people, 574,000 dwelling units and 595,000 jobs. The five goals include the following:

- Goal 1 – Create a Compact Urban Area
- Goal 2 – Support a Sustainable Economy
- Goal 3 – Protect the Region's Environment and Respond to Climate Change Impacts
- Goal 4 – Develop Complete Communities
- Goal 5 – Support Sustainable Transportation Choices

The strategies associated with the goals include over two hundred actions that will define the future direction of Metro Vancouver, municipalities and other governments and agencies in supporting implementation of the RGS. Recognizing the political structure in place, the RGS establishes a set of more standardized rules across the region to be reflected in the RCS submissions of the twenty-two individual member municipalities. As a result, the RGS will be expected to establish a more robust regional regulatory framework than presently exists, recognizing the role and function of the RCS submission and acceptance process.

A number of Regional Land Use Designations and mapping overlays are the principal tools used to achieve the guiding goals and associated strategies within the RGS. These land use designations establish the long-term regional land use framework and provide the basis for defining matters of regional significance. The boundaries for the regional land use designations are established on a parcel-based map maintained by the Metro Vancouver and are depicted on the Regional Land Designations map (Map 2 in the RGS). The general locations of Urban Centres and Frequent Transit Development Areas map overlays will be defined by municipalities at the time of the preparation of their RCS and subsequently shown on Maps 2 and 4 of the RGS.

An overview of the five goals and their related strategic approach and their general acceptability in relation to the City of Burnaby's existing OCP (OCP) and Regional Context Statement (RCS) is as follows.

### **5.1 Goal 1 – Create a Compact Urban Area**

Strategies under this goal of the RGS delineate between urban and non-urban areas in the form of an *Urban Containment Boundary* (UCB). They also seek to focus growth in *Urban Centres* and *Frequent Transit Development Corridors* and protect the region's rural lands from urban development.

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### **5.1.1 Strategy 1.1 - Contain Urban Development within the Urban Containment Boundary (UCB)**

The UCB is used to define the broad extent of urban development and growth in the region. Its application is intended to contain and focus urban growth in the region; protect ecological, recreation, agricultural and rural lands; help reduce travel distances; and make the most of investments in the region's infrastructure and transit systems.

The UCB includes all lands designated for urban development under the *RGS*, and makes a distinction between *General Urban* and *Non-Urban* designations. *Urban* designations include *Urban Centres*, *Frequent Transit Development Corridors*, *Industrial*, *Mixed Employment*, *Special Activity* and *General Urban* areas. *Non-Urban* designations within the UCB include *Conservation*, *Agricultural* and *Rural* areas. All of Burnaby is situated within the UCB.

### **5.1.2 Strategy 1.2 - Municipal Growth Projections**

Within this strategy element of the *RGS*, municipalities are to provide municipal population, dwelling unit and employment projections, with reference to guidelines contained in the *RGS*, demonstrating how municipal plans will accommodate Metro Vancouver's projected growth. Reference to these projections will need to be included in the *RCS* within the City's *OCP* that will need to be submitted to the Metro Vancouver Board for approval within two years of the *RGS* approval.

The *RGS* contains guideline projections for growth to 2041 by municipality. These are "*to assist in long range planning and are guidelines only*", and therefore, are not to be regarded as specific targets for implementation by each municipality. For Burnaby, the stated projections are:

- **Population:** increasing from 210,500 in 2006 to 345,000 by 2041, an increase of 64% or about 1.8% per year.
- **Dwelling Unit Count:** increasing from 81,110 in 2006 to 149,300 by 2041, an increase of 84%, or about 2.4% per year.
- **Employment:** increasing from 136,000 in 2006 to 203,000 by 2041, an increase of 49%, or about 1.4% per year.

In the *RGS*, Burnaby is projected to have a relative regional proportional increase in both population and dwelling units (from 9.6% in 2006 to 10.1% in 2041 for population and from 9.6% in 2006 to 10.5% in 2041 for dwellings). On the other hand, it is projected that total employment in Burnaby will show a relative decline from 11.7% in 2006 to 11.6% in 2041. There is no information in the *RGS* that would indicate the intended proposed internal distribution of population, dwelling units and employment within individual municipalities as related to the various land use designations and categories. However, the information showing population, dwelling unit and employment projections by municipalities suggest expectations at the municipal level as a whole. Local governments have been engaged in a process to review the figures presented in the *RGS*, however, a detailed examination of their

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full implications has not been concluded. It is therefore unknown at this time, whether, and in what specific manner, the projections and targets could, or would, be supported by the City's established OCP and other community plans. Accordingly, whether these expectations are realistic, or not, at the municipal level for Burnaby, and perhaps other jurisdictions, and will need to be determined through a more detailed review as part of the preparation of the City's OCP and RCS.

The key questions for the City is the extent to which existing policies would address the projected population, and unit count, and secondly, to what extent any new policies would have to be introduced for review and discussion as a means to accommodate projected growth. The same applies for employment growth and the need for the City to maintain a healthy tax base and favourable labour force to employment ratio. A determination of the acceptable level of growth for the City will require a "ground up" analysis of the various development opportunities (either existing or new) to provide for the City's response to the population and employment targets in the RGS. Staff expect to complete this work to provide a general understanding how the City would be reaching its expected growth allocations to inform any public review process for a renewed RCS and/or OCP.

### **5.1.3 Strategy 1.3 - Focus Growth in Urban Centres and Frequent Development Corridors**

The RGS provides for strengthening *Urban Centres* by establishing a hierarchy of centres throughout the region to help concentrate office, retail, community, entertainment, cultural, institutional and higher density residential uses that are well served by transit and the road network. *Urban Centres* include the Metropolitan Core (Vancouver's downtown area), Surrey Metro Centre, the Regional City Centres and Municipal Town Centres.

The Metropolitan Core and Surrey Metro Centre are the designated 'core areas' and are intended to accommodate the region's most dense forms of residential and commercial development and be the region's primary focus for jobs. Supporting the two metropolitan core areas, is a series of Regional City Centres, of which Metrotown Town Centre is one. Regional City Centres are intended to be centres of activity for the sub-regions, with opportunities for regional or sub-regional office locations, large-scale, high density commercial uses and medium and high-density residential development forms.

Municipal Town Centre designations are also provided for, and include Metrotown, Lougheed, Brentwood and Edmonds Town Centres in Burnaby. These four municipal town centres are fundamental components of the City's long established urban structure, and generally accommodate similar opportunities for higher density and intensity use. As such, while Metrotown is recognized as having a Regional City Centre designation, the ability for the City to also accommodate significant office and high-density residential growth in Brentwood, Lougheed or Edmonds Town Centres is consistent with City plans and objectives. Each are well positioned to develop with substantial medium to high density residential forms, and to accommodate local, sub-regional and regional serving retail, commercial, and office development in close proximity to major road and transit facilities, and institutional and recreation amenities. Burnaby's four town centre areas, as defined in its

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OCP, fits well with the Regional City Centres and Municipal Town Centre concept as presented in the RGS.

Key municipal actions presented in the RGS include facilitating urban centre development by including the use of policies/incentives (e.g. development density bonuses) to encourage office development and reduced residential and commercial parking in coordination with improved transit services, where appropriate. These forms of initiatives are already in use by the City.

The RGS provides for the designation of Frequent Transit Development Corridors as an additional overlay to the land use designations. These are intended to be additional priority locations to accommodate concentrated growth in higher density residential, commercial and mixed uses forms of development. They also may contain community, cultural and institutional uses. They are intended to be located at appropriate locations along TransLink's Frequent Transit Network. This designation will only apply to appropriate lands identified within accepted RCS by local governments.

Burnaby has long supported higher densities of land uses along the historical transit corridors of Kingsway, Edmonds Street and Hastings Street by encouraging a mix of uses that would reduce dependence on the automobile and make transit more viable. More specifically, the City has encouraged this concept through the introduction of higher density apartment and supporting commercial development opportunities both within designated Town Centres and Urban Village nodes along the Expo and Millennium SkyTrain Lines. The Urban Villages have been designated and developed to accommodate residential, retail, commercial and other community services and amenities. The City's Urban Village areas are well-established components of the City's urban landscape through adopted Community Plans.

The RGS has included a new provision for the designation of *Local Centres* that incorporate a mix of housing types and local-serving commercial, social, cultural, recreational and institutional activities. While not a formal component of the Urban Centres concept described in the RGS, the inclusion of the Local Centres concept in the RGS accommodates the existing and planned development of the City's Urban Village areas and Suburban Multi-Family Communities as defined within the OCP. The latter provides for non-town centre multi-family development associated with a service commercial area. The *Urban Villages and Suburban Multi-Family Communities* vary significantly in scale, mix of uses and density (e.g. from the higher density residential community at Montecito down to the lower density and smaller scale Willingdon Heights area (Madison Avenue/William Street). The locations of these areas have been provided to Metro Vancouver for their inclusion as "Local Centres". These are graphically depicted as *Local Centres* on Map 11 of the RGS.

Burnaby's established urban development framework of Town Centre, Urban Village and Business Centre areas currently incorporate all of the areas that would potentially qualify as *Frequent Transit Development Corridors*. It remains to be determined, however, whether this concept would have merit for submission to the Region as part of a future RCS for Burnaby.

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The third component of Strategy 1.2 requires policies for the region's *General Urban* areas. This category affects the largest segment of the Metro area and involves the most diverse range, forms and densities within this category. It captures the balance of development lands on the Regional 'zoning map' within the Urban Containment Boundary that are not assigned to other land use categories (i.e. *Urban Centres, Frequent Transit Development Corridors, Industrial, Mixed Employment, Local Centres and Special Activity Areas*) and is intended to provide lands for residential, commercial, institutional, and other urban development forms. It excludes the Rural, Agricultural and Conservation-Recreation land use designation areas that collectively establish the majority of lands within the current Green Zone that may be located inside the UCB. The *General Urban* area also captures the balance of municipal park lands, water bodies, conservation lands, cemeteries, and other lands, that are not specifically designated as Regional rural, agricultural or conservation-recreation lands, but may not be intended for future urban development. As an established inner municipality within the Burrard Peninsula, the City of Burnaby has, as might be expected, the largest majority of its land area within the *General Urban* designation with its associated diversity and mix of uses, forms and densities.

Required actions for municipalities with respect to *General Urban* areas include ensuring that development densities are generally lower in comparison to *Urban Centres* and *Frequent Transit Development Areas* and encouraging infill development by directing growth to established areas, where possible. The *General Urban* category as presented in the RGS generally conforms to the City's existing planning policies for these areas. It is noted that the boundaries of the *General Urban* area would be confirmed as part of a future RCS for Burnaby.

## **5.2 Goal 2 – Support a Sustainable Economy**

This goal seeks to provide opportunities for services and jobs close to where people live in order to achieve greater efficiencies and transportation access. The RGS is primarily concerned with land use and transportation linkages to support the region's economy and does not purport to be an economic development strategy.

The Strategy emphasizes more intensive use of *Urban Centres and Frequent Transit Development Areas* for employment and major trip generating uses and seeks protection of industrial lands and strengthening the region's agricultural sector.

### **5.2.1 Strategy 2.1 - Promote Land Development Patterns that Support a Diverse Regional Economy and Employment Close to Where People Live**

This strategy element looks to focus economic activity within *Urban Centres, Frequent Transit Development Corridors, Special Activity Areas* and *Industrial Areas* and restrict major office and institutional development to *Urban Centres*. Mention is also provided in this section for Metro Vancouver to investigate the means to address "*municipal tax base inequities, including a regional tax-base sharing framework*". Staff would expect that there would be further detailed consultation by the Region on the implications of any such framework prior to implementation.

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For their part, municipalities will need to incorporate policies in their RCS which:

- support economic development in Urban Centres, Frequent Transit Development Corridors, Special Activity Areas and Industrial areas;
- support the development of office space within Urban Centres; and
- discourage major commercial (including office) and institutional development outside of Urban Centres.

The City has traditionally supported and encouraged the development of commercial development (including offices) within its Urban Centres and will continue to do so. The maximum density provisions for office and commercial development within our Zoning Bylaw are significant and restricted to their use only within our designated Regional and Municipal Town Centres. Generally, the allowable maximum densities for commercial development within the City's Town Centres are six times higher than those permitted within our neighbourhood commercial, community commercial and Business Centre areas.

### **5.2.2 Strategy 2.2 - Protect the Supply of Industrial Land**

This section seeks to protect the region's industrial land base and prevent non-industrial uses from occupying those lands. It further establishes the concept of *Mixed Employment* areas for industrial as well as stand-alone office, business and retail uses.

Within this strategy, municipalities will need to incorporate policies in their RCS which:

- prevent non-industrial uses in industrial areas;
- restrict office and retail uses in industrial areas to small scale and ancillary activities;
- encourage better utilization and intensification of existing industrial areas for industrial uses;
- accommodate Mixed Employment Areas;
- provide for commercial uses (including offices) in Mixed Employment Areas, which are not more appropriately located in Urban Centres, Frequent Transit Development Corridors or Industrial Areas; and
- discourage further expansion of Mixed Employment Areas.

The City supports the designation of *Industrial* areas and their use for appropriate industrial activities as contained within our prevailing industrial zoning designations and districts.

Over the history of the City's development, our industrial land districts have evolved to meet the needs of the community and industry. This recognizes that over the years there have been market forces at play that have seen a gradual migration outward of less intensive, large land-based industrial users to accommodate more intensive and varied users of industrial lands. The current zoning districts provide opportunities for the full range of industrial activities from heavy industrial to light industrial to office and high technology uses. The distribution of these uses in the City have been determined by historical development patterns, surrounding uses, access considerations, soil conditions and other factors and recognizes

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variances in allowable uses within the different industrial zoning categories. This has been an iterative process that has resulted in an industrial development framework that contributes to the City's diversity of employment and broad tax base, and makes significant contributions to the local and regional economy. As market and economic conditions have changed, the City has made the necessary adjustments to these industrial zoning districts and associated designated lands to ensure that they remain contemporary and meet community needs.

The lands identified as appropriate for designation to "*Industrial*" in Burnaby under the RGS are generally consistent with those lands identified on Maps 2 and 6 of the strategy. These include the City's heavy industrial, general and light industrial lands that are currently designated and zoned for industrial use, and exclude the City's Business Centre lands, and with noted limited exceptions, some industrial sites that have been specifically designated for alternative future uses by Council in line with the City's adopted OCP, community plans and policies. Under the provisions of the RGS, the range of permitted industrial uses for these designated industrial lands is to be consistent with the provisions of the City's Zoning Bylaw.

The RGS has clarified the role for Mixed Employment Areas that incorporates the City's range of Business Centre areas. Mixed Employment Areas support a mix of industrial, commercial, office and other related employment uses, including intensification policies for industrial activities where appropriate. Where Mixed Employment Areas are located within Urban Centres or Frequent Transit Development Areas, they can support higher density commercial development. Elsewhere, infill and expansion of Mixed Employment Areas is to be accommodated based on currently accepted local plans and policies. The location of Burnaby's Mixed Employment Areas is generally consistent with those depicted on Map 6 of the RGS and linked to the location of the City's currently designated Business Centres.

### **5.2.3 Strategy 2.3 - Protect the Region's Supply of Agricultural Land and Promote Agricultural Viability**

This section is intended to promote regional and municipal support for protecting the region's agricultural lands and promote their agricultural viability.

The *Agricultural* lands within the City of Burnaby are all located within the Big Bend area with over 350 acres of land parcels being within the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) and utilized for agricultural, habitat protection and park uses.

The municipal policies included in the updated RGS are intended to discourage farm fragmentation, maintain and improve utility and transportation infrastructure for agriculture, manage the agricultural-urban interface, support economic development for agricultural opportunities (such as agri-tourism, farm retail sales and urban agriculture) and support the use of agricultural lands for food production.

Within this strategy, the Agricultural Land Commission is to consult with Metro Vancouver to ensure consistency between the Regional Growth Strategy and the Commission's decisions and policies concerning ALR exclusion and inclusion applications and consideration of non-farm uses with regional scale impacts.

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Burnaby has a long history of protecting agricultural lands within the Big Bend area through support of the ALR and the implementation of supporting Big Bend Community Plan designations for agricultural use and agricultural zoning. The City has also promoted the development of urban agricultural in the area through the leasing of City lands within the ALR at nominal rates for both agricultural production and community garden allotment use. The proposed actions within the RGS to protect the Region's supply of agricultural land and to encourage its use for food production is consistent with underlying objectives of the ALR and existing municipal plans and zoning.

### **5.3 Goal 3 - Protect the Environment and Respond to Climate Change Impacts**

The protection of the region's ecological network is sought through four strategies. The first protects important natural areas through a *Conservation and Recreation* land use designation. The second strategy recognizes the importance of providing connectivity throughout the region with greenways linking important natural features. Other strategies encourage a collaborative effort to protect and enhance natural areas, promote land use and transportation development that reduces greenhouse gas emissions and climate change impacts and advance land use and transportation infrastructure that helps mitigate climate change impacts and natural hazard risks. Staff would note that Council has approved an Environmental Sustainability Strategy process to be initiated this year that assists in further defining the City's response to this regional goal.

#### **5.3.1 Strategy 3.1 - Protect Lands within the Conservation and Recreation Areas**

This strategy deals with the delineation of the Conservation and Recreation areas at both the regional and municipal level and assigns appropriate land uses that are to be adhered to by municipalities. A cornerstone of the City's land use management approach, as defined in its OCP, is the protection of its "Green Zone" lands. Under the 1996 Livable Region Strategic Plan the Green Zone was established as a regional land use designation to identify and protect both agricultural and conservation park areas. The new RGS will eliminate the "Green Zone" identification in favour of separate land use designations for both Conservation & Recreation and the Agricultural lands.

The strategy elements within this section of the RGS are considered to be generally consistent with existing City actions and practices. The City has over 150 parks and public open spaces covering about 5,500 acres, which represents 25% of the City's land base. The City has had an ongoing program of permanently protecting public open space through the public referenda process. To date about 3,400 acres of parks and public open space areas have been dedicated through this process.

#### **5.3.2 Strategy 3.2 - Protect and Enhance Natural Features and their Connectivity**

Within their respective RCS's, municipalities are to include policies and/or maps indicating how ecologically important areas and natural features (as conceptually shown on Map 10 of the RGS) will be managed. In addition, municipalities, in collaboration with other agencies, are to develop and manage municipal components of the Metro Vancouver Regional Recreation Greenway Network (as depicted on Map 9 of the RGS), with municipal

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connections where appropriate. These greenways correspond to the City's own greenway initiative and largely developed Urban Trail network including the Trans-Canada Trail, Burnaby Mountain Urban Trail, Central Valley Greenway, B.C. Parkway, and the Burnaby Fraser Foreshore Park's river walk.

In addition, watershed and ecosystem planning and/or Stormwater Management Plans are to be considered in the development of municipal plans and measures, to protect, enhance and restore important ecological features. These requested actions are considered to be generally consistent with policies and practices already in place within the City.

### **5.3.3 Strategy 3.3 - Encourage Land Use and Transportation Infrastructure that Reduce Energy Consumption and Greenhouse Gas Emissions, and Improve Air Quality**

A significant component of the RGS related to its strategies and actions is the contribution to achieve regional greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets. Within the RCS, municipalities are to:

- identify how their respective land development and transportation strategies will help meet municipal and regional greenhouse gas reduction targets;
- identify other policies and/or programs that reduce energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions such as building retrofits, construction of new buildings to green performance standards and renewable energy generation technologies;
- encourage community design and facility provision that encourages transit, cycling and pedestrian movements; and
- focus infrastructure and amenity investments in Urban Centres and at appropriate locations along TransLink's Frequent Transit Network.

These requirements are considered to be achievable in the preparation of the City's RCS.

### **5.3.4 Strategy 3.4 - Encourage Land Use and Transportation Infrastructure that Improve the Ability to Withstand Climate Change Impacts and Natural Hazard Risks**

This item seeks to promote land use and transportation development that minimizes risks associated with natural hazards such as flooding, erosion, interface fires, slope instability, earthquakes and climate change impacts.

Through its established regulatory processes (e.g. subdivision, building permits, rezonings, etc.), the City minimizes land hazard risks associated with development. At the same time, it has established procedures and contingencies associated with disaster planning and response to best address existing and potential risks throughout the City as a whole. These processes and actions are under continual refinement to ensure that the City is best prepared to help safeguard development and minimize risks.

The City will be in a position to include policies in its RCS that encourage land use and development that would minimize risks associated with climate change and natural hazards.

#### **5.4 Goal 4 – Develop Complete Communities**

This goal establishes strategies to provide diverse and affordable housing choices to respond to the needs of a population with varied characteristics within communities accessible to a wide range of services and amenities close to home.

##### **5.4.1 Strategy 4.1 - Provide Diverse and Affordable Housing Choices**

Within its RCS submission, there is to be an inclusion of policies or strategies that indicate how the City will work towards meeting the estimated future housing demand as set out in the RGS. The RGS provides a ten-year estimate of housing demand for municipalities by tenure and household income. For Burnaby, it shows a ten-year demand of an additional 21,300 dwelling units. Of these, 13,800 (65 percent) relate to ownership demand and 7,500 (35 percent) to rental demand. Of the 7,500 rental unit demand, 2,900 (39 percent) are categorized as “moderate income” demand, 2,400 (32 percent) as “low income” demand and 2,200 (29 percent) as “market” rental demand.

City staff did not develop the housing demand estimates for the City of Burnaby. It is noted that these figures have been provided to assist in long range planning and are guidelines only. Nevertheless, given the requirement of the RCS submission to identify policies that “work towards” these demand estimates; their value lie more in the general directions identified, rather than precise targets to be met. The City will be preparing its own estimates of dwelling unit and population growth during the preparation of its updated OCP and associated RCS. City staff would undertake to confirm that the figures presented are realistic estimates of demand and the ability to meet these targets.

The RGS does not propose that municipalities assume any direct provider role in addressing social housing needs. Rather, it recognizes a facilitating role which would:

- ensure the provision of diverse housing options within municipal plans and policies;
- increases the supply and diversity of housing through infill developments, increased density and more compact housing forms;
- collaborates with senior levels of government in increasing the supply of affordable rental units for low to moderate income households through incentive policies, such as density bonus provisions and inclusionary zoning, particularly in areas well served by transit; and
- helps facilitate affordable housing development through measures such as streamlined approvals, reduced parking, and lease of public property where appropriate.

While not for inclusion within the RCS, it is suggested that municipalities voluntarily prepare and implement Housing Action Plans subsequent to a RCS. The plans would be intended to:

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- assess local market conditions, by tenure, including assessing housing supply, demand and affordability;
- identify housing priorities and implementation measures within the jurisdiction and financial capabilities of municipalities, and;
- encourage the supply of new rental housing and where appropriate mitigate the loss of existing rental stock.

In previous submissions relating to the RGS, the City has documented the many steps it has taken in helping respond to an increase of affordable housing within the City. At the same time, it has been noted that while the objectives of the requirements for municipalities are generally supportable, there is a clear awareness that municipalities are limited in their financial resources, mandates and operating priorities to pursue and implement significant responses to the challenges presented. With this clear caveat in mind, the City will endeavor to respond to its assigned role to the extent possible.

The RGS rightly recognizes the primary role of the federal and provincial governments in providing incentives to stimulate private sector investment in rental housing and to provide capital and operating funding to help achieve low and moderate income housing, as well as supportive and transitional housing. The RGS calls for the Federal and Provincial governments to become more proactive in these areas consistent with their constitutional responsibilities and associated financial resources. While demand side programs, such as rent supplements, are becoming more prevalent, they have limited effectiveness in markets with low vacancy rates and high market values. More supply side emphasis is urgently needed to develop new rental market housing through additional funding and tax/financial incentive programs to rekindle private sector investment in rental housing preferably in the context of a coordinated national and provincial housing strategy that will allow for more sustainable funding over longer term periods.

#### **5.4.2 Strategy 4.2 – Develop Healthy and Complete Communities with Access to a Range of Services and Amenities**

Complete communities are characterized as being walkable, mixed-use and transit oriented areas where people can find an appropriate place to live at all stages of their lives, earn a living, access the services they need, and enjoy, social, cultural, educational and recreational pursuits. Access to this wide range of services and amenities close to home, combined with a strong sense of community identity and connection are important in promoting overall well-being.

In terms of the RCS expectations for this strategy element, there are a number of items that may be referenced. The municipal policies and strategies listed in this strategy element are laudable and include the following:

- supporting compact, mixed use, transit, cycling and walking oriented communities;
- locating community, cultural, recreational, institutional, educational, medical/health, social service and affordable housing development in Urban Centres or other areas with good access to transit;

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- providing public spaces for increased social interaction;
- support active living through provision of recreational facilities, and inviting and safe parks, trails and bikeways;
- supporting local food production and distribution;
- assessing overall health implications of proposed new communities, infrastructure and transportation services;
- supporting universally accessible community design; and
- identify and reinforce small scale local centres that provide a mix of housing types, local serving commercial activities and good access to transit.

To help ensure its overall Social Sustainability, the City is developing a strategy that will build on existing goals, and on Burnaby's positive social attributes and assets, to guide decisions and resource allocations for social issues. With the assistance of an assembled blue-ribbon panel of community members and subject experts, the Social Sustainability Strategy will provide a foundation for the continued strengthening of Burnaby's overall well-being, enhancing Burnaby's status as a livable, vibrant and sustainable community – a place that facilitates an engaged and active citizenry, a healthy economy and a strong respect for and stewardship of the natural environment.

With the completion of this current undertaking, the City will be in an improved position to address these components of a healthy and complete community at the time it prepares its updated OCP and RCS.

## **5.5 Goal 5 – Support Sustainable Transportation Choices**

The last goal of the RGS promotes the integration of land use and transportation strategies by encouraging patterns of compact growth and transit-oriented development and reducing dependency on the automobile for travel movements.

### **5.5.1 Strategy 5.1 – Coordinate Land Use and Transportation to Encourage Transit, Multi-Occupancy Vehicles, Cycling and Walking**

To a large extent, this strategy focuses on improved collaboration between TransLink, Metro Vancouver, the Province and municipalities to coordinate land use strategies with transportation investments.

The RGS acknowledges that TransLink has the mandate to prepare and implement the regional transportation system and demand management strategies. To that end, the RGS requests that TransLink, in collaboration with municipalities, Metro Vancouver, the federal government and the province prepare and implement strategic transportation plans that support the underlying objectives of the RGS (i.e. focused growth in Urban Centres and Frequent Transportation Development Areas and other appropriate areas along TransLink's Frequent Transit Network). More specifically, it requests that TransLink provide Metro Vancouver with adequate opportunity to provide input into TransLink's strategic planning and decision-making process affecting Metro Vancouver's RGS objectives and priorities.

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The RGS now provides Metro Vancouver's priorities for the expansion of the Frequent Transit Network. Priority 1 is identified as the Evergreen Rapid Transit line connecting Lougheed Town Centre, Port Moody Inlet Centre and Coquitlam Regional City Centre.

Municipal RCS's are to identify land use and transportation policies and actions, and how they are coordinated, to encourage a greater share of trips made by transit, multiple-occupancy vehicles, cycling and walking and support TransLink's Frequent Transit Network. Also to be identified are policies and actions that support the development and implementation of municipal and regional transportation system and demand management strategies (e.g. parking pricing and supply measures, transit priority actions, car-sharing, etc.).

The Burnaby Transportation Plan addresses the large majority of these RCS requirements. A review of the Transportation Plan which will help form the City's response to the RGS and the update of the City's OCP will be initiated this year.

#### **5.5.2 Strategy 5.2 – Coordinate Land Use and Transportation to Support the Safe and Efficient Movement of Vehicles for Passengers, Goods and Services**

This strategy recognizes the fundamental role that TransLink's Major Road Network, provincial highways and federal transportation facilities play in shaping regional growth and moving people and goods. It advocates for active management of the existing and planned capacity of the road network and minimizing the need for its capital-intensive expansion in the future.

A primary requirement for municipalities relative to this strategy item will be to map, within their RCS, municipal routes for the movement of goods and service vehicles to, from, and within Industrial areas, Mixed Employment Areas, Urban Centres, Frequent Transit Development Corridors, Agricultural and Special Employment areas. The strategy also requires municipalities to identify land use and related policies and actions that support optimizing the efficient movement of vehicles for passengers, goods and services on the Major Road Network, provincial highways and federal transportation facilities.

The RCS will also need to demonstrate support for the development of local and regional transportation system management strategies and the protection of rail rights-of-way and access points to waterways for goods movement.

As was raised in a previous submission to Metro Vancouver concerning a previous draft of the RGS, a basic premise of the Regional Roads Concept should be to provide the necessary connectivity to and from the various higher activity areas in the region. Clearly, the intent of the concept is to illustrate the future vision and connectivity of regional roads. However, a comparison with the City's Major Road Network as contained in the OCP reveals some significant omissions (primary arterials) in the Regional Road Concept. These include:

- Southridge Drive from Marine Way to Tenth Avenue;
- Tenth Avenue from Griffiths Avenue to McBride Avenue; and

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- the Stormont-McBride Connector route (via a cut and cover tunnel) from 10<sup>th</sup> Tenth Avenue to Highway #1.

The completeness of the Regional Road Concept is particularly essential to the development of strategies associated with the efficient movement of goods and service vehicles. However, it is recognized that these missing linkages need to be pursued through amendments of TransLink's Major Road Network, rather than through the RGS process. The City intends to pursue these amendments, as appropriate and following discussions with the City of New Westminster.

The adopted Burnaby Transportation Plan, as summarized in the City's OCP, provides the comprehensive policy direction for transportation planning and development in the City, and together with the Transportation Plan update, will provide the basis for developing the City's RCS requirements as related to Strategy 5.2.

It is noted that within this strategy element is the identified need for TransLink and the Province to consider the impacts on the achievement of the RGS and the Air Quality Management Plan and evaluate transportation demand management strategies when contemplating future expansion of private vehicle capacity on highways, major roads and bridges. It further requests that TransLink and the Province, in collaboration with municipalities, seek to minimize impacts from within-and-through movement on the environment and public health affecting the region.

#### **5.6 Metro Vancouver Regional Growth Strategy Official Land Use Designation Map Dated - January 11, 2011**

Included in the submission of the City's 2010 October report to the Metro Vancouver Board was an attachment defining the City's boundaries for its General Urban, Mixed Employment, Industrial, Agricultural and Conservation Recreation areas for designation within the RGS. However, a staff review of the Official Land Use Designation Map (dated 2011 January 11) associated with the RGS, has identified about twenty minor mapping errors that do not reflect the City of Burnaby's detailed parcel based Land Use Designations for the RGS.

Staff have noted these mapping errors and are working with Metro Vancouver staff to resolve these inconsistent representations of Council's adopted land use designations. These appear to administrative inconsistencies that can be resolved through ongoing discussion with Metro Vancouver and/or at the time of the City's submission of its RCS.

### **6.0 MONITORING AND PERFORMANCE MEASURES**

A component of the RGS involves Metro Vancouver preparing an annual report on the progress in meeting its goals utilizing fifty-five statistical performance measures. These measures relate to the five goals and attempt to provide numerical criteria to assess the relative success of the various strategy actions.

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With respect to the individual measures included in this section, it is noted that under Strategy 1.2 (Focus Growth in Urban Centres and Frequent Transit Development Corridors) the percentage of new dwelling units and employment located in Urban Centres and Frequent Transit Development Corridors is to be monitored as a measure of success. As has been noted in previous submissions to Metro Vancouver, it needs to be recognized that this measure will not exclude planned multi-family higher density residential growth in the City's Urban Village and Suburban Multi-Family Communities areas, which is to occur within the General Urban and Local Centres designations. Similar multi-family residential growth will likely occur within other "inner" municipalities as well. Another consideration is the fact that Frequent Transit Development Corridors have not yet been designated, nor is there any indication at this point how many will actually be established.


A performance measure within Strategy 2.1 (*Promote land development patterns that support a diverse regional economy and employment close to where people live.*) is to track the percentage of new office and retail development locating within and outside of Urban Centres and Frequent Transit Development Corridors. While the City has always supported the focusing and intensification of office and retail commercial development within its urban town centres, it has been pointed out in our previous submissions to Metro Vancouver that some lower density office development in Mixed Employment Areas will occur, consistent with the adopted community plans for these areas.

## **7.0 THE UPDATED OVERALL REGULATORY AND IMPLEMENTATION / AMENDMENT PROCESSES**

Affected local governments had considerable comments and concerns about the RGS implementation and amendment processes as proposed in earlier drafts of the Strategy. 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 revised RGS made an improvement to its implementation and regulatory aspects by better defining what is and is not "regionally significant". This 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 (TAC)**

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.

As outlined in our 2010 October report to Council on the RGS, this new approach is considered to be more workable and more reflective of the direction of the changes requested in our previous submissions. Clarity provided and changes made include the following:

- No RCS reference, nor Metro Vancouver Board involvement, is required on rezonings consistent with a municipality’s OCP.
- 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.

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- 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 expectation is that it will now accept a RCS 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). Regardless, with Board approval, a RCS is deemed, at that point, to be consistent with the RGS, and any necessary or arising amendments to the RGS would be affected at that point.
- 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 RGS document 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 permitted to include provision in its RCS that permits amendments to the municipality's OCP to adjust the boundaries of its Urban Centres and Frequent Transit Development Areas (strategy action 6.2.6) in keeping with the applicable guidelines within the RGS, accepted RCS and City land use policy approaches.

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The 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 RGS goals or objectives and proposed process amendments for making minor amendments to the RGS. Type 2 involves Minor Amendments, also requiring 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; and
- to add, delete or amend descriptions of land use designations or actions under each strategy.

The third type of amendment category also involves 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; and
- 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 RCS.

In comparison with earlier 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 somewhat 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 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.

While 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.

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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.

## **8.0 NEXT STEPS**

As outlined earlier, affected local governments have 60 days to respond to the RGS Strategy Bylaw from the time of formal notification of the Board's referral (i.e. 2010 January 21). Within the 60 days period, municipalities must, by resolution, either accept the regional growth strategy, or refuse to accept it. If all affected local governments accept the RGS, then the Board will be asked to consider final adoption of the bylaw.

Within two years of the date of the Metro Vancouver Board's final adoption of the RGS, each municipality must include a RCS within its OCP, and submit the RCS to the Metro Vancouver Board for acceptance. The RCS must identify the relationship between the OCP and the goals, strategies and actions identified in the RGS. In considering acceptance of a municipality's RCS, the Board will expect that the RCS is "generally consistent" with the goals, strategies and actions of the RCS and the parcel-based regional land use designations depicted in Map 2 of the RCS.

The Metro Vancouver Board must accept or decline the RCS from each municipality by a simple majority weighted vote within 120 days of its submission. If a RCS is declined, the Regional Board must specify which provisions are not acceptable and the reasons for the Board's objection.

The revision of the City's OCP and companion RCS will be a major undertaking and will present a challenge with respect to the timeline imposed and available staff resources. The RGS has over two hundred goals, strategies and action items, of which almost a hundred are included as within the role of municipalities that will need to be addressed. With the seemingly close conclusion of the RGS, there is now an available regional planning context for the City to commence its OCP and RCS update.

## **9.0 CONCLUSION**

As previously stated, achieving a general consensus in the development of a RGS amongst the twenty-two regional communities has been a challenging task. In the earlier stages of the RGS development process, there were a host of proposals advanced that would have seriously impacted local planning authority and accountability and added a whole new layer of complexity and potential delays in the development approval process.

A number of key issues and concerns were repeatedly addressed in our staff reports and advanced by our Council to the Region. These included:

- identifying clearer roles and responsibilities for local government and the regional government and restricting regional involvement to those matters with a significant regional interest;

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- protecting local autonomy and accountability in the development and implementation of municipal planning matters;
- avoiding duplication in the interpretation of zoning and designations;
- maintaining local jurisdiction over zoning bylaws, and avoiding additional complexity and delays in the development approvals process; and
- reducing uncertainty and the potential for future misunderstandings between the Region and local governments.

The City's involvement in the extended RGS preparation process has been taken from a dual perspective of significant concern with the potential impact on local planning by way of an increased regional regulatory role, and, at the same time, a philosophical commitment to the need for a contemporary regional planning framework.

At the same time as our view was often contrary to the specific proposals being advanced, the commitment of the Regional Staff, City staff, our Council and the Regional Board to achieve a successful resolution was always maintained. While taking on the difficult discussion of the points of conflict between local autonomy in land use decisions and broader Regional objectives was not the easiest route, nor one without ongoing tensions, the adjustments to the resulting plan have proven beneficial to its overall acceptability. It is believed that the process has achieved a reasonable position from which to ensure that the City's interests are protected in the finalized RGS document, while still making a local contribution toward regional objectives.

Staff recognize that it has also been a challenging process for Metro Vancouver to develop some level of consensus from the twenty-two communities in the region. While any resulting Regional Growth Strategy would always be expected to have some deficiencies, it nevertheless, does provide a regional planning framework that should yield benefits that otherwise would not be achieved in the region.

In comparison to the regional planning framework established under the current Livable Region Strategic Plan which was based on a broad consensus approach with virtually no regulatory control, the current RGS does intrude somewhat on local planning autonomy. Nevertheless, the most recent changes to the RGS document have substantially addressed our past concerns as to how this relationship is defined. To some extent, a somewhat stronger regional government role is one of the costs of creating a regional plan that incorporates some future accountability between City neighbours. At the same time, it is expected that the City will remain diligent in protecting the balance of roles that has been established, and that this position is maintained and clearly documented in our next OCP and RCS submissions.

City staff have two views of the future once the RGS is adopted by the Metro Vancouver Board. The first relates to the fact that the City, its citizens and the development community have always valued the certainty of our land use plans, policies and development approval processes. In this regard, it is expected that from a land use designation, development approval and zoning bylaw perspective, it will largely be "business as usual" in Burnaby. This result of the process is largely due to the fact that the new Regional land use designations and related strategies closely align with the City's established OCP and community plans.

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From a development perspective, the City will continue will continue to focus on:

- higher density mixed use and community serving development in our primary four town centres;
- development of 13 urban village areas for medium to high density residential uses with supporting services;
- continue protection of the character of our established single and two-family neighbourhoods;
- intensification of our designated industrial land base for industrial uses;
- development of our Business Park lands for a range of high tech, office and light industrial uses; and
- the continued protection of our agricultural lands and significant park and open space areas.

From a development application point of view, the City, nor the development community, should need to be engaged with the Region on any development applications or proposals that are consistent with existing City plans or policies. Any necessary changes to our OCP and Community Plans arising from the need to meet new commitments in the RGS, or for locally supported land use changes, would be advanced by Council to the Region as a part of the City's OCP and RCS submissions.

At a City staff level, we anticipate that we will have to put forward additional effort to detail and document the relationship of our plans to the RGS in order to achieve acceptance of our RCS at the Board. This work will also ensure that we have a clear position and acceptance of our response to the Regional plan.


Generally, this first view of the future is that the proposed RGS is on track to maintain an appropriate level of local autonomy, while advancing Regional objectives.

The second view for the future, however, involves some level of uncertainty as to whether the current common understandings and agreements on the existing content of the RGS, and future changes to land use designations in the Region, will be carried forward as expected.

We can expect that local decisions that potentially could run counter to a Regional view will receive increased scrutiny. In the same vein, Regional positions that run counter to accepted local plans and understandings will need to be addressed by local jurisdictions. While such potential tensions are intended to result in the betterment of the Region, there is the potential for some frustration at the local level. More hopefully, the way forward will likely involve continued dialogue on local and regional interests – with an ongoing commitment to achieve successful resolutions. It is anticipated that Metro Vancouver's approval of the City's clearly defined RCS within an updated OCP within the next two years, will keep any uncertainty to an absolute minimum. However, that is not to say that the City won't need to remain diligent in ensuring that potential slippage towards increasing regional authority does not occur.

To: City Manager  
From: Director Planning and Building  
Re: Regional Growth Strategy, Bylaw No. 1136, 2010  
(Metro Vancouver 2040: Shaping Our Future)  
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***Based on the above, it is recommended that Council advise the Metro Vancouver Board that, in accordance with Section 857 of the Local Government Act, the City of Burnaby accepts the Regional Growth Strategy as contained in Regional Growth Strategy Bylaw No. 1136, 2010 (Metro Vancouver 2040: Shaping Our Future).***

  
B. Luksun, Director  
PLANNING AND BUILDING

JSB/LP/JW:tn

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