Metro Vancouver: Regional Spatial Planning and Economic Development

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ISRN May 5, 2010
Problem Statement

Will private market land investment decisions in combination with the individual land use decisions of member municipalities and the infrastructure decisions of senior governments result in functional long term spatial patterns for a regional economy to flourish?
Presentation Outline

1. Metropolitan Governance
2. Regional Growth Strategy Elements
3. Why Protect Industrial Land Supply?
4. Proposed Industrial Land Protection Policies
5. Long Term Benefits: Robust and Resilient Economy
Local Government Act in BC gives regional districts statutory authority to adopt regional plans. Regional Context Statement provides the policy link between a municipal Official Community Plan and the Regional Growth Strategy.
A Tradition of Regional Growth Management
2. Regional Growth Strategy Elements
Region-wide Challenges

- Managing Growth and Ensuring Adequate Capacity
- Building Complete Communities
- Supporting a Strong and Competitive Economy
- Improving Housing Diversity and Affordability
- Protecting Natural Assets
- Optimizing the Use of Infrastructure
- Coordinating Efficient Land Use and Transportation
- Reducing Energy Use and GHG Production
Current Population 2.2 million - additional 1.2 million by 2041
Current Households 850,000 - additional 560,000 by 2041
Current Jobs 1.2 million - additional 600,000 by 2041
Draft New Regional Growth Strategy Goals

**GOAL 1** Create a Compact Urban Area

**GOAL 2** Support a Sustainable Economy

**GOAL 3** Protect the Region’s Natural Environment & Respond to Climate Change

**GOAL 4** Develop Complete Communities

**GOAL 5** Support Sustainable Transportation Choices
Protect Conservation and Recreation Areas
A Network of Centres

Urban Containment Boundary

General Urban

Urban Centres
- Metropolitan Core
- Surrey Metro Centre
- Regional City Centres
- Municipal Town Centres

Transit Concept
- Existing SkyTrain / SeaBus
- Proposed Rapid Transit (Rail or Bus)
- Westcoast Express

Special Activity Areas
- Educational
- International Airport
Create and Connect Vibrant Centres
Room for Industrial Jobs
Regional Growth Strategy Map
3. Why Protect Industrial Land Supply?
Definition of “industry”

- Production, distribution, repair, transportation, storage, utilities.
- Uses that cannot fit well into urban centres.
- Land prices lower than all other uses, except agricultural land.
- Does not include high tech offices, call centres, financial back offices, big box retailing.
Why Protect Industrial Land Supply?

1. Limited remaining industrial land supply
   - Future shortage expected by 2020-2025
   - Need to preserve lands for efficient and appropriate uses and support general economy
   - Prevent irreversible conversion to other uses
Vacant Industrial Lands Supply Distribution (2005)

- Langleys 11%
- Richmond 17%
- Surrey 45%
- Delta 7%
- Northeast Sector 6%
- Burnaby/New Westminster 6%
- Vancouver 1%
- Maple Ridge/Pitt Meadows 5%
- North Shore 2%

Source: Metro Vancouver 2006
Employment Industry Trends

Vancouver CMA Employment by Industry
(Grouped by Industry Type Relating to Land / Space Needs)

2. Regional and Local Consequences of using industrial land for office and retail uses:

- Increases greenhouse gas emissions, traffic congestion / time / cost and reduces operating / transportation efficiencies
- Reduces transit options for employees
- Weakens urban centres by depriving them of appropriate office and retail users and vitality
Achieving Greenhouse Gas Reduction Targets

How we got around in 2006
- Motorized Vehicle: 76%
- Bicycle: 2%
- Walking: 11%
- Transit: 11%

How we’ll get around in 2040
- Motorized Vehicle: 43%
- Bicycle: 5%
- Walking: 22%
- Transit: 30%
Distribution of Office Floorspace Growth in Metro Vancouver (1990-2006)

- Metro Core: 40% (7.4 M sq ft)
- Regional City Centres: 11% (2.1 M sq ft)
- Out of Centres: 49% (9.1 M sq ft)
Efficient Transportation - How workers get to work

Metro Core
- Walk: 5%
- Transit: 40%
- Auto: 55%

Metrotown
- Walk: 10%
- Transit: 30%
- Auto: 60%

Office Park
- Walk: 15%
- Transit: 15%
- Auto: 70%

The data shows the percentage of workers using different modes of transportation at the Metro Core, Metrotown, and Office Park locations.
Greenhouse Gas Emissions from travel to work

Commuter GHG Emissions from 200 employees working in a 50,000 ft$^2$ office building

- **Metro Core**
- **Metrotown**
- **Office Park**

Tonnes per Year

0 50 100 150 200 250
4. Proposed Regional Industrial Land Protection Policies
Most of the employment dispersal has been the result of industrial lands being developed for non-industrial uses due to:

- cheaper land, cheaper development costs (tilt up construction, surface parking, flexibility) attracts developers
- higher tax revenue, off site amenity improvements, more attractive form of development, higher employment attracts municipalities
Regional Role

Absence of a regional policy framework has meant municipalities knew if they turned down proposals to convert industrial land, developers/businesses would simply move to the next municipality.
Proposed Regional Industrial Land Policies

- Protect industrial land - municipality must apply to Metro Board to remove industrial land designation
- Direct office development / retail to appropriate transit oriented urban centres and corridors
- Supportive tools: appropriate zoning, density bonusing, variable DCC rates, lower parking standards, reduce development costs in centres, etc
Interests and tensions in adopting industrial policy

- Pursuing regional goals versus preserving local autonomy
- Local property tax issues
- Private land interests
- Provincial - big investment in goods movement transportation infrastructure - want industrial land base secured
- National - concerned about adequate land base for gateway function
- National - growing awareness of getting office jobs and services in accessible transit locations
- Port Authority
5. Long Term Benefits
Benefits of Successful Regional Industrial Policies

1. Adequate long term supply of industrial lands in the region

2. Secure industrial lands near transportation infrastructure (highways, ports, airports, rail)

3. Attract and maintain investment and jobs in the region

4. Efficient transportation system for goods and people

5. As many jobs as possible accessible by transit

6. Building vibrant communities, advancing place-making