Greater Vancouver Regional District
The Livable Region Strategic Plan

An integrated regional approach to land-use and transportation planning
(Introductory)

- now I turn to an outline of the plan that will provide the steps towards realizing the vision

- here is the cover of the adopted regional growth strategy, the Livable Region Strategic Plan
The Need for a Regional Growth Strategy

- Unmanaged growth - sprawl
- Declining environmental quality
- Lack of coordination between municipalities

Lower Mainland Population 1961-2021

Population

1,000,000
2,000,000
3,000,000
4,000,000
5,000,000
6,000,000
7,000,000
8,000,000
9,000,000
10,000,000

“Greater Vancouver can become the first urban region in the world to combine in one place the things to which humanity aspires on a global basis: a place where human activities enhance rather than degrade the natural environment, where the quality of the built environment approaches that of the natural setting, where the diversity of origins and religions is a source of strength rather than strife, where people control the destiny of their community, and where the basics of food, clothing, shelter, security and useful activity are accessible to all.”

Following from the ideas of partnership, consensus, and stewardship, this is the Board’s vision for the future: (READ TEXT)
Livable Region Strategic Plan

Key Strategies

- Protect the Green Zone
- Build more complete communities
- Achieve a compact metropolitan region
- Increase transportation choice

- These are the four main policy elements of the LRSP
• The next challenge was how to relate land use - where the population and jobs are located - transportation and air quality.

• All three are connected. The decisions on each element affects the others so we have to ensure that they all work together towards environmental quality.
Protecting the Green Zone means

- designating and protecting some areas of the region from urban development;

- these areas include farmland, parks, and environmentally sensitive areas, such as watersheds, bogs, streams, and greenways (green corridors through the existing urbanized areas);

- in addition to protecting green areas, this element of the LRSP supports the shared development of a regional parks and outdoor recreation system.

Extent: 2/3 of regional land base; 1/2 of lowland areas

Effectively, an urban containment boundary.
Although urbanized areas may be very close by, our region’s remaining farmland is protected, and agriculture is valued both as a lifestyle and as an important element of the regional economy.
Streams and other environmentally-sensitive areas are also protected.

Aside from their aesthetic and recreational values for humans, streams provide:

• refuge and habitat for plant and animal species;
• safe corridors for animal movements throughout the urbanized;
• locations for the retention of biodiversity;
• sources of cooling for the “urban heat island”; and
• natural drainage systems for stormwater.
Systems of parks, trails, and greenways allow relatively low-impact access to these pleasant green spaces for the human population of this region.

These spaces will become increasingly important as we become a larger and more urbanized region over the next twenty years and beyond.
• When we put those areas together, they represent two-thirds of the region’s land base - half of the potentially developable low land area.

• The Green Zone serves not only to protect ecological and resource lands but also to set the long term urban growth boundary for Greater Vancouver.

• This was a policy that was built from the bottom up, but with a recognition that environmental issues can only be understood at a regional level and must be addressed as a regional community.
One strategy was to build more complete communities throughout the region.

This would reduce long-distance automobile commuting by ensuring that, in all areas of the region, there are job opportunities for local residents;
The strategy would provide a network of high-quality mixed activity urban centres as focal points for community, and as hubs for high-capacity public transit linkages;

These centres, and their local scale community counterparts, will provide a diverse stock of housing for all ages and incomes, will provide centralized locations for public services, and will support more local-scale travel by non-automobile modes.
• In downtown Vancouver, this policy means adding housing close to the concentration of jobs.

• About two-thirds of the residents walk, bike or ride transit to work in downtown Vancouver; and about one third drive.
Centres integrate living, working and playing
A further strategy seeks to concentrate population growth within the central part of the region. This would

- limit sprawl and reduce pressure on the Green Zone;
- reduce the need for long-distance automobile commuting by keeping jobs and people relatively close together;
- provide the population density necessary for an effective public transit service.
• The objective is to slow the steady eastward spread of the city.

• And to stop building communities like this one, which mostly single family houses, has no commercial development so you have to drive everywhere, and is very difficult to serve by public transit.
• This is intensified by 1981.
• And today, we see major suburban communities.
So the objective is to concentrate about two-thirds of the region’s population growth into the Growth Concentration Area, the central, established part of the region.
• And it means more townhouses and small apartment buildings throughout the region.

• Currently, about 45% the region’s households live in some form of multiple family housing, and it represents about three-quarters of the housing production.
Increase Transportation Choice

- Manage growth
- Manage transportation demand
- Provide transportation supply to reinforce the first two levers

Three levers:

Manage growth: population, housing, and employment location to minimize the demand for long-distance travel, especially by single-occupant vehicle

Manage transportation demand: providing alternatives and incentives for more benign modes (carrots) and reflect true costs of less-benign modes

Provide supply: spending on both transit and road infrastructure, but always in support of the two other levers
• This has implications for traffic congestion,
• And for air quality as a result of the number of vehicles.
• Alternatively, we would like to decrease our dependence on automobiles and increase the use of public transit.

• Currently operating in the region are a commuter rail line, light rail, a ferry across the inner harbour and the bus system.

• We are currently opening a new light rail line and adding some capacity to the bus service. It is, however, proving very difficult to find the funding necessary to develop the public transit system.
• When you put it all together you see:

  • a strong urban growth boundary and environmental protection zone in the Green Zone,

  • the concentration of growth in the central, established part of the region to slow the eastward spread of the city,

  • a strong central core and regional town centres throughout the region providing a focus for higher density development and business,

  • an emphasis on public transit linking downtown and the town centres.
Monitoring and Results:

- Annual monitoring indicates Plan is generally effective.
- Two-thirds region within the Green Zone; protected areas increased by 60,000 ha.
- Substantial development of town centres; 70% new housing is multi-family.
- 70% new growth within growth concentration area.
- Greater Vancouver Transportation Authority established. Increased transit use in town centres.
Challenges:

- Town centres only moderately successful in attracting jobs, result is dispersal to office parks
- Existing development pattern difficult to serve with transportation and utilities in areas
- Managing the edge and the interior of the Green Zone
- Greenhouse gas emissions increasing
- Social and economic aspects need to be addressed
• So, what is next?

• The Board has initiated a review of the LRSP after five years to ensure that we are on the right track.

• This review is being undertaken within the framework of regional social, environmental and economic sustainability. Sustainability is a global movement and we need to ensure that our plans provide not only well-being for our region but also do our part for global initiatives such as climate change and the protection of biodiversity.

• In taking action in the future, we will have to work closely with the Province and the Federal governments.

• And we value the opportunity to work with you.
Thank you