

SECTION E – PUBLIC POLICY

E.1 EXISTING MUNICIPAL & AREA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES

E.1.1 Policy Overview

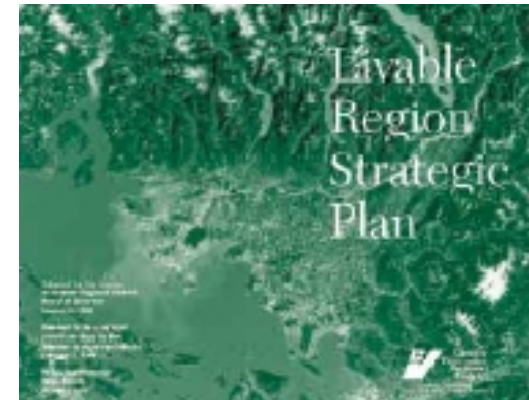
While policy for future development is elaborated at the local municipal level, there are provincial and regional directives that provide a contextual framework. The Province of British Columbia *Growth Strategies Act* encourages inter-municipal co-ordination of growth and development. The Act gives Regional Districts the authority to prepare a regional growth strategy, and requires consistency between it and City plans.

The *Livable Region Strategic Plan (LRSP)*, provides a context for regional planning in the Greater Vancouver Regional District (GVRD). Past trends saw GVRD growth come in the form of low density sprawl, interspersed with pockets of higher density that were largely unconnected by effective transportation services. This pattern of growth caused the loss of available farmland and green space, reduced air quality, greater distances between where residents live and work, and increasing reliance on the automobile.

The *LRSP's* approach to growth management rests on four fundamental strategies:

- Protect the Green Zone
- Build Complete Communities
- Achieve a Compact Metropolitan Region
- Increase Transportation Choice

These strategies will be implemented through partnerships between the GVRD Board and other levels of government and GVRD member municipalities in particular.



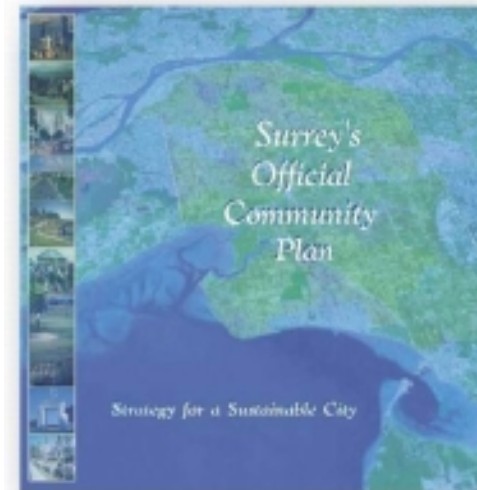
E.1.2 Auto Oriented Pattern

The City of Surrey's *Official Community Plan (OCP), 2002*, has ten policies to guide development and land use for the coming years. They are consistent with the *LRSP* and include:

- Manage Growth for Compact Communities
- Build a Sustainable Local Economy
- Build Complete Communities
- Enhance Image and Character
- Increase Transportation Choice
- Protect Agriculture and Agricultural Areas
- Protect Natural Areas
- Provide Parks and Recreational Facilities
- Improve the Quality of Community
- Enhance Citizens' Safety and Well-being Through Crime Prevention

While all the policies are linked, the following will focus on economic development in Surrey through the intention to 'Build a Sustainable Local Economy'.

The *OCP* promotes the concept of a complete city, compact in form, with a hierarchy of centres, balancing a high quality residential environment with a strong and sustainable local economy. A strong local economy provides livelihood for residents in terms of jobs, consumer goods and services, and business and investment opportunities. A strong local economy is also important for the fiscal health and functioning of the City in providing the public infrastructure, facilities and services that contribute to the quality of life and communities in the City.



Other planning documents supplement the *OCP*, developing it to the next level of detail. For example, *The Surrey Transportation Plan* co-ordinates transportation with economic development to ensure that the transportation system addresses the needs of business and industry. This includes linkages between Surrey City Centre and Vancouver International Airport, and access to the Fraser Surrey Docks and an advanced communications network accommodated within public rights-of-way.

Although Surrey is the second largest City in the GVRD, Surrey has a relatively small share of the region's commercial and industrial development. In 1997, Surrey had only 13% of the total built commercial and industrial floor area in the GVRD. By the year 2021, Surrey's population is expected to reach 545,000 with a labour force of about 275,000. With projections for continuing high rates of population growth, Surrey projects the need to achieve higher rates of business sector and employment growth to achieve the desired balance between the residential labour force and number of local jobs.

Surrey's *OCP* therefore outlines ten key directions to build a sustainable local economy:

- Balance Residential and Economic Development
- Ensure an Adequate Land Supply to Facilitate Long Term Economic Growth
- Allow Flexibility in Land Use Policies to Accommodate Business Development in New and Appropriate Locations
- Pro-actively Encourage Local Economic Growth
- Encourage High Quality and Environmentally Responsible Development
- Facilitate the Development of a Strong City Centre
- Balance the Distribution of Economic Development Among Surrey's Towns and Neighbourhoods

- Promote Agriculture as an Economic Growth Sector
- Promote Tourism as an Economic Growth Sector
- Enhance Surrey’s Character and Image as a Business City

From a comparison with the *OCP* for 1986 it is clear that the concept of sustainability is a new direction for Surrey. In 1986 the economic goals were to ensure industrial growth while reducing the impact of its development and, to ensure the maximum utilisation of municipal services. However, in the plan, these economic policies were unrelated to other initiatives. What is clear is that during the intervening years a more integrated approach has been developed, recognising the inter-connectivity of all elements of community life in a successful municipal environment--“As many of us now know, a sustainable community is one that balances ecology, economy, and equity” (Sustainable Urban Landscapes). East Clayton, a neighbourhood in Surrey, is an example of recent sustainable planning.

East Clayton

The East Clayton Neighbourhood Concept Plan makes a number of changes to the many unsustainable conventions of the surrounding areas. The district includes commercial services within a five-minute walk of all residents. It has an intensely interconnected street system for ease of movement through the area and reduced auto dependency. It allows for a range of densities in each designated area and encourages a variety of housing types on the same street. It includes enough job locations to supply one job per household. Finally, it has a natural drainage system where most water that falls on the site is absorbed into the ground.

E.1.3 Pedestrian Oriented Pattern

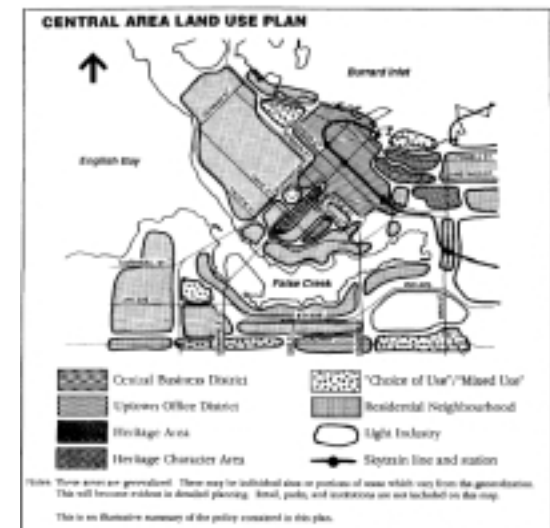
The City of Vancouver is unusual in that it does not have a primary planning document in the form of an official community plan. Instead it has *CityPlan* which provides overall directions for planning in Vancouver as well as component local area plans which are still in the process of completion. From the outset, *CityPlan* allowed for significant public input; over 20,000 people actively participated through questionnaires and working sessions. With regard to economic development the *CityPlan* direction is to:

- Provide for a variety of jobs in the city
- Concentrate major job growth in the downtown
- Maintain industrial areas
- Focus other job growth in neighbourhood centres

CityPlan supports a diverse economy for Vancouver with jobs close to home. It is also recognized that Vancouver will continue to be the “region’s downtown” with major office jobs located downtown close to transit. It is the intention to retain industrial areas so that industries that serve the city can be close to customers and workers. Other service and retail jobs will be located in neighbourhood centres closer to where people live and shop.

In 1991, Council adopted the *Central Area Plan* that calls for the downtown business district to grow and continue as the major centre in the region. While *CityPlan* supports this direction it also includes three new directions for the city’s economy.

- A mixed economy with a wide range of jobs.
- Ends the policy of the previous two decades of converting industrial land to housing and large-scale retail
- Locates home in neighbourhood centres.



Southeast False Creek

The *Southeast False Creek Plan* is a recent example of a local area plan developed to a more detailed level. As with East Clayton, it is based on sustainability principles of a mixed, affordable residential community with easy access to jobs and services close to home. It also calls for a vibrant and diverse local economy; ecologically designed buildings and infrastructure and public awareness of ecological stewardship. It is interesting that CityPlan does not mention sustainable planning principles specifically but at the local area level this approach is pursued. Furthermore, since Southeast False Creek is a current and former industrial area, it would appear that the local plan diverges from the CityPlan policy of maintaining industrial areas.

References:

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