Regional Growth Strategy

IMPLEMENTATION GUIDELINE #1

Regional Context Statements

Metro Vancouver 2040
Shaping Our Future

Adopted by the Metro Vancouver Board on March 2, 2012
# Table of Contents

1 Introduction ..........................................................................................................................1
   1.1 The Local Government Act and Regional Context Statements ..................................2
   2.1 Developing Regional Context Statements .................................................................3

2 Developing and Amending Regional Context Statements ..............................................3
   2.2 Regional Context Statement Disputes .....................................................................5
   2.3 Amending Accepted Regional Context Statements .................................................5
   2.4 Amending Existing Regional Context Statements ................................................6
   2.5 Regional Context Statements that Trigger Regional Growth Strategy Amendments ..8

3 General Consistency Between Regional Growth Strategy and Regional Context Statements ..........................................................................................................................10

4 Mapping ..............................................................................................................11
   4.1 Regional Land Use Designations and Urban Containment Boundary ....................11
      4.1.1 Boundary Adjustments for Regional Land Use Designations ........................12
   4.2 Regional Overlays .....................................................................................................13
      4.2.1 Urban Centres .................................................................................................13
      4.2.2 Frequent Transit Development Areas ..............................................................13
      4.2.3 Boundary Adjustments for Regional Overlays .............................................14
   4.3 Additional Mapping Features: Local Centres and Special Employment Areas .......14
      4.3.1 Local Centres .................................................................................................14
      4.3.2 Special Employment Areas ............................................................................14
   4.4 Reference Maps ........................................................................................................14
   4.5 Special Study Areas and Sewerage Extension Areas ............................................15
   4.6 Map Updates ............................................................................................................15

5 Population, Dwelling Unit and Employment Projections ..............................................16

6 Guidance on Selected RGS Strategies ............................................................................17
6.1 GOAL 1
Create a Compact Urban Area

6.1.1 Strategy 1.3 Protect rural areas from urban development

6.2 GOAL 2
Support a Sustainable Economy

6.2.1 Strategy 2.2 Protect the supply of industrial land

6.2.2 Strategy 2.3 Protect the supply of agricultural land and promote agricultural viability with an emphasis on food production

6.3 GOAL 4
Develop Complete Communities

6.4 GOAL 5
Support Sustainable Transportation Choices

6.4.1 Strategy 5.1
Coordinate land use and transportation to encourage transit, multiple-occupancy vehicles, cycling and walking

6.4.2 Strategy 5.2
Coordinate land use and transportation to support the safe and efficient movement of vehicles for passengers, goods and services

7 Format of Regional Context Statement

APPENDIX 1 Regional Land Use Designation Areas by Municipality

APPENDIX 2 Resources

Figures and Tables

Figure 1 Regional Context Statement Acceptance Process
Figure 2 Process for Amending Regional Context Statements and Regional Growth Strategy
Table 1 Summary of Mapping Elements to Include in Regional Context Statements: Required and Optional Elements
1 Introduction

Metro Vancouver adopted a new Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) on July 29, 2011, following acceptance by all affected local governments, namely Metro Vancouver’s member municipalities, Tsawwassen First Nation, TransLink, the Fraser Valley Regional District and the Squamish-Lillooet Regional District. The RGS represents consensus among Metro Vancouver and affected local governments to work collaboratively to meet our collective regional planning goals of creating a compact urban area, supporting a sustainable economy, protecting the environment, responding to climate change impacts, developing complete communities and supporting sustainable transportation choices.

Successful implementation of the RGS depends on cooperation between Metro Vancouver, and affected local governments and the ability of local plans, policies and programs to contribute to the regional planning objectives identified in the RGS. The Regional Context Statements are the key documents that identify the relationship between the RGS and local Official Community Plans (OCPs) and as such, are the main implementation tool of the Regional Growth Strategy.

Under the RGS, Metro Vancouver is responsible for preparing guidelines to assist in implementing the RGS (section 6.15, p. 64). This set of guidelines provides guidance to municipalities on developing Regional Context Statements. This document should be read in conjunction with the RGS, and it does not replace or supersede the content of, or the requirements set out in, the RGS. This document is one in a series of guidelines related to the RGS.
1.1 The Local Government Act and Regional Context Statements

Section 866 of the Local Government Act establishes the requirement for local governments to prepare Regional Context Statements. Section 866 provides, among other things:

“(1) If a regional growth strategy applies to all or part of the same area of a municipality as an official community plan, the official community plan must include a regional context statement that is accepted in accordance with this section by the board of the regional district for which the regional growth strategy is adopted.

(2) A regional context statement under subsection (1) must specifically identify:

(a) the relationship between the official community plan and the matters referred to in section 850(2) and any other regional matters included under section 850(3), and

(b) if applicable, how the official community plan is to be made consistent with the regional growth strategy over time.

(3) A regional context statement under subsection (1) and the rest of the official community plan must be consistent.”

Municipalities must submit a Regional Context Statement within two years of the adoption of the Regional Growth Strategy (Local Government Act, Section 866(8)). This means that Metro Vancouver’s member municipalities must submit new Regional Context Statements before July 29, 2013.

After a new Regional Context Statement has been accepted by the Metro Vancouver Board there are three instances in which municipalities will be required to submit a revised or new Regional Context Statement:

1. When a new Official Community Plan is being developed.

2. When amendments to an existing Official Community Plan are proposed that are not consistent with the accepted Regional Context Statement.

3. Within five years of the Board’s latest acceptance of the Regional Context Statement.
2 Developing and Amending Regional Context Statements

2.1 Developing Regional Context Statements
It is anticipated that Regional Context Statements will be developed as follows:

1. Initiation of an Official Community Plan and Regional Context Statement
   - Municipality initiates the OCP review
   - Municipal staff contacts Metro Vancouver staff and advises of OCP review process and development of Regional Context Statement and proposed timeline
   - Metro Vancouver staff review Regional Context Statements that have been previously accepted by the Metro Vancouver Board to identify any past regional issues or policies specific to that municipality that may still be relevant in the development of the new Regional Context Statement
   - Municipality develops draft OCP and RCS, including maps

2. Metro Vancouver Staff Review of Draft OCP and Regional Context Statement
   - Municipality provides draft OCP and Regional Context Statement, including maps, to Metro Vancouver staff. This step is typically undertaken when a municipality releases a draft OCP for public comment
   - Municipality identifies Frequent Transit Development Areas (if applicable), in consultation with TransLink, and requests TransLink review and written comment on proposed FTDAs
   - Metro Vancouver staff informs Regional Planning and Agriculture Committee that OCP Review and Regional Context Statement development is underway. Municipality may also wish to present information about its OCP Review and Regional Context Statement to the Regional Planning Advisory Committee at this time
   - Metro Vancouver staff (all departments – Parks, Housing, Utilities, Aboriginal Relations) provides comments
   - Municipal staff and Metro Vancouver staff work together to refine the draft Regional Context Statement
### Formal Submission of Regional Context Statement by Municipality

- Municipality gives first and second reading to the OCP bylaw
- Municipality refers municipal bylaw to Metro Vancouver staff (and other agencies/organizations) for comments prior to public hearing. Metro Vancouver staff review and comment on Regional Context Statement prior to public hearing (this includes coordinating comments from staff other Metro Vancouver departments)
- After public hearing, municipality gives third reading to OCP bylaw and submits the Regional Context Statement to the Metro Vancouver Board for acceptance. Submission of the Regional Context Statement to the Board by the municipality is done by Council resolution. Municipality also forwards TransLink’s written comments on proposed FTDAs (if applicable) (section 6.2.2) to the Metro Vancouver Board.

It is important to note that municipalities may submit a Regional Context Statement to the Metro Vancouver Board for acceptance either before or after the municipality holds its public hearing on the OCP bylaw. It is recommended that municipalities forward the Regional Context Statement to Metro Vancouver after public hearing and third reading. If a municipality submits its Regional Context Statement to the Metro Vancouver Board for acceptance before holding the public hearing and, as a result of the public hearing the municipality revises its Regional Context Statement, the municipality will be required to re-submit its Regional Context Statement to the Metro Vancouver Board.

### Metro Vancouver Consideration of Regional Context Statement

- Metro Vancouver staff prepares report
- Metro Vancouver’s Regional Planning Committee receives staff report and makes recommendation to the Metro Vancouver Board
- Metro Vancouver Board considers acceptance of the Regional Context Statement
- Metro Vancouver staff informs municipality of Metro Vancouver Board’s acceptance or non-acceptance
- If the Regional Context Statement is accepted by the Metro Vancouver Board, municipality gives third and final reading to the bylaw and adopts OCP
Municipalities are advised to contact Metro Vancouver staff early in the development of the Regional Context Statement. Early collaboration helps to ensure that municipal and regional expectations regarding the process and content of a Regional Context Statement are clear before moving to formal bylaw readings.

Similarly, municipalities are advised to contact TransLink early in the development of Regional Context Statements to discuss and receive input on transportation or other components that may have an impact on regional transportation systems or priorities. Metro Vancouver can assist with population, dwelling unit and employment projections and mapping. Working with regional agencies early in the process allows regional staff to review more quickly a Regional Context Statement once the official referral has been made. Municipalities can also request Metro Vancouver staff and TransLink staff provide early feedback on any proposed Frequent Transit Development Areas.

Regional Context Statements are accepted by resolution, meaning a 50% + 1 weighted vote of the Metro Vancouver Board is needed. A regional public hearing is not required. Metro Vancouver must respond within 120 days of receiving a proposed Regional Context Statement from a municipality. If Metro Vancouver does not respond within 120 days, the Board is deemed to have accepted the Regional Context Statement (Local Government Act, section 866(5)). Municipalities may wish to contact Metro Vancouver staff to discuss the timelines for Metro Vancouver Committee and Board meetings.

2.2 Regional Context Statement Disputes

If the Board declines to accept a Regional Context Statement, it must indicate each provision to which it objects, and the reasons for its objections (Local Government Act, section 866(5)). The Local Government Act sets out a process for resolving a dispute between the regional district and the municipality (see sections 866(7), 856, 858 to 862, and 864). If the Metro Vancouver Board declines to accept a Regional Context Statement, the Board must notify the provincial Minister, who then determines whether a non-binding or binding dispute resolution process will be used. If the parties are directed to a non-binding process, they design the process that they wish to use to resolve the dispute.

2.3 Amending Accepted Regional Context Statements

A Regional Context Statement and an OCP must be consistent (Local Government Act, section 866(3)). If a municipality wishes to amend a policy or land use designation in its OCP that is inconsistent with its accepted Regional Context Statement the municipality must submit a revised Regional Context Statement to the Metro Vancouver Board for acceptance. For example, to allow residential development on a parcel of land with an Industrial regional land use designation, the municipality must first submit its revised Regional Context Statement to change the regional land use designation from Industrial to General Urban to the Metro Vancouver Board for acceptance.
The process for amending an accepted Regional Context Statement is the same as the process for initial acceptance of the Regional Context Statement, described in section 2.1 of this document. Municipalities are encouraged to contact Metro Vancouver (and Translink, if appropriate), early in the amendment process. Municipalities must forward to TransLink for written comment any Regional Context Statement amendments that would impact the regional transportation system or significantly affect the demand for regional transportation services (RGS section 6.6.1).

2.4 Amending Existing Regional Context Statements

There may be instances where a municipality wishes to amend its existing Regional Context Statement that was prepared in accordance with the Livable Region Strategic Plan prior to submitting its new Regional Context Statement. In these cases, the municipality must submit the Regional Context Statement amendment to the Metro Vancouver Board for acceptance. However, this will not satisfy the municipality’s obligation to submit a new Regional Context Statement under section 866(2) of the Local Government Act.

During the period between the adoption of the Regional Growth Strategy and the acceptance of the municipality’s first Regional Context Statement prepared in accordance with the new RGS, section 6.2.11 requests municipalities to seek comment from the Metro Vancouver Board on proposed amendments to the municipality’s Official Community Plan that are inconsistent with the Regional Growth Strategy. Requests for comments should be made in writing to the Metro Vancouver Board.
Regional Context Statements

Figure 1 Regional Context Statement Acceptance Process

**Metro Vancouver Process**

1. Initial staff review
2. Metro Vancouver staff provided with draft OCP/RCS bylaw for initial comments
3. Metro Vancouver staff provide comment on draft bylaw
4. Metro Vancouver staff prepare covering report
5. Report and RCS to Regional Planning and Agriculture Committee
6. Metro Vancouver Board acceptance by resolution (50%+1 weighted vote)

**Municipal Process ★**

1. Municipality initiates RCS/OCP amendment process
2. Municipality introduces RCS/OCP amendment bylaw
3. Referral for MV staff comment
4. RCS/OCP amendment bylaw is given 1st and 2nd reading
5. Municipal public hearing
6. Formal request for RCS acceptance by MV Board
7. Municipal public hearing and 3rd reading
8. Municipality adopts RCS/OCP amendment bylaw

★ Note: Municipalities have the option to submit the bylaw to Metro Vancouver at any time before fourth reading. Submitting the bylaw to Metro Vancouver before a municipal public hearing could introduce the possibility that the municipality will change the bylaw as a result of the public hearing, and thus have to re-submit the Regional Context Statement to Metro Vancouver. Submitting the Regional Context Statement after third reading reduces this possibility.
2.5 Regional Context Statements that Trigger Regional Growth Strategy Amendments

A municipality may anticipate that its proposed Regional Context Statement is not generally consistent with the Regional Growth Strategy and therefore would not be accepted by the Metro Vancouver Board. As set out in Section 6.2.4 (p. 58) of the RGS, the municipality may, at the time of submitting its Regional Context Statement to the Metro Vancouver Board for acceptance, also request an RGS amendment.

If the Regional Context Statement and the request for amendment to the RGS are submitted at the same time, Metro Vancouver will process the two items concurrently (guidelines on amending the Regional Growth Strategy are forthcoming). Refer to Figure 2. Metro Vancouver will endeavour to process Regional Growth Strategy amendments that are a result of Regional Context Statement amendments within the 120-period for acceptance of Regional Context Statements.

The following scenarios provide clarification on when an amendment to the Regional Growth Strategy may be required:

Scenario #1 - Municipality amends OCP, and no Regional Context Statement or RGS amendment is required – in this scenario, the municipality proposes to make amendments to its OCP land use designations that fall within the flexibility provided for in section 6.2.7 of the RGS. In this case, no amendment to the Regional Context Statement or RGS is required. After the OCP is amended, the municipality notifies Metro Vancouver that the amendment has been made.

Scenario #2 - Municipality amends OCP, and Regional Context Statement amendment required – in this scenario, the municipality proposes to make amendments to its OCP land use designations that are beyond the flexibility provided for in section 6.2.7 of the RGS, and are not consistent with the municipality’s accepted Regional Context Statement. However, the municipality believes that the proposed amendments are generally consistent with the RGS. In this case, the municipality submits a revised Regional Context Statement to the Metro Vancouver Board for acceptance. There is always the possibility that the Board may not agree with the municipality’s assessment of general consistency.

Scenario #3 - Municipality amends OCP, and Regional Context Statement and RGS amendment required – in this scenario, the municipality proposes amendments to its OCP land use designations that are beyond the flexibility provided for in section 6.2.7 of the RGS, are not consistent with the municipality’s accepted Regional Context Statement, and are generally not consistent with the RGS. In this case, the municipality submits a revised Regional Context Statement to the Metro Vancouver Board and at the same time, requests the Board to amend the RGS.
Figure 2 Process for Amending Regional Context Statements and Regional Growth Strategy

- **Non-Acceptance:**
  - Metro Vancouver Board will not proceed with RGS amendment.
  - RGS amendment application is terminated;
  - RCS is not accepted.

- **Acceptance:**
  - Metro Vancouver Board will proceed with RGS amendment.

1. Municipality revises RCS and re-submits;
2. Municipality withdraws proposed changes to RCS;
3. Metro Vancouver and municipality proceed with dispute resolution process outlined in the LGA.

*Note: This figure illustrates a process for amending Regional Context Statements and the Regional Growth Strategy concurrently. Regional Growth Strategy amendments can be submitted independent of Regional Context Statements.*
3 General Consistency Between Regional Growth Strategy and Regional Context Statements

The *Local Government Act* (section 866(2)(b)) requires that Regional Context Statements must “... identify (a) the relationship between the official community plan and the matters referred to in section 850(2) and any other regional matters included under section 850(3), and (b) if applicable, how the official community plan is to be made consistent with the regional growth strategy over time.” Acknowledging the language in the Act and the allowance for consistency over time, section 6.2.6 of the RGS (p. 58) sets out expectations for “general consistency” between Regional Context Statements and the RGS’s goals, strategies, actions and parcel-based regional land use designations.

Metro Vancouver expects that Regional Context Statements will address all of the goals, strategies and municipal actions identified in the RGS. In instances where an RGS action is not applicable to the municipality, the Regional Context Statement should note that those actions do not apply. For example, if a municipality does not contain certain regional land use designations within its boundaries, it does not need to incorporate those land use designations or policies in its Regional Context Statement. Where consistency is not yet achieved, the Regional Context Statement can include “work toward clauses,” which should set out the actions and timeline that the municipality intends to pursue in order to achieve consistency between its Regional Context Statement and the RGS goals, strategies and actions and land use designations.

A fundamental principle guiding the preparation of the RGS was to provide as much clarity in the RGS goals, strategies, actions and land use designation intent statements as possible, so that municipalities have sufficient understanding of how to respond in Regional Context Statements and so that there would be some level of consistency amongst municipalities in their responses. In practice, each municipality’s OCP and Regional Context Statement will respond to the context of the individual municipality, and to that extent, there will be variations in Regional Context Statements from one municipality to the next to accommodate local situations and solutions. Over time the concept of “general consistency” will evolve, as Regional Context Statements are developed, and as the Board makes decisions on whether to accept Regional Context Statements and proposed amendments to the Regional Growth Strategy.
4 Mapping

The RGS contains Land Use Designations, Overlays and an Urban Containment Boundary (Section D, p. 9). These establish the regional land use framework and identify the geographic areas that are subject to regional policies.

Regional Context Statements must contain maps depicting the regional Land Use Designations, Overlays and the Urban Containment Boundary. These maps may be contained in the main body or in an appendix of the Regional Context Statement, and will form a part of the Regional Context Statement. Regional Land Use Designations, Overlays and the Urban Containment Boundary must not be identified by referring to maps outside of the Regional Context Statement (e.g. may not be identified by referring to an Official Community Plan, Local Plan or Area Plan map).

Parcel boundaries for Land Use Designations in Regional Context Statements should be the same as those shown in the Regional Growth Strategy. Where there are differences, the municipality must provide a map showing the variations and explain the reasons for the variations.

Metro Vancouver municipalities have different practices for mapping land use boundaries. When developing the RGS maps, Metro Vancouver generally followed each municipality’s mapping practice for land within that municipality. However, at the parcel-level there are variations as to how the designations have been mapped. It is likely that when developing maps for Regional Context Statements, municipalities will identify adjustments to boundaries to reflect mapping practices. It is anticipated that the Metro Vancouver Board would consider that these types of mapping variations are generally consistent with the Regional Growth Strategy.

4.1 Regional Land Use Designations and Urban Containment Boundary

The Regional Growth Strategy establishes an Urban Containment Boundary and the following regional Land Use Designations:

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

Land Use Designations and the Urban Containment Boundary are depicted on a parcel-based map in the Regional Growth Strategy (Map 2, p. 11). Metro Vancouver maintains the parcel based Land Use Designations and Urban Containment Boundary in a Geographic Information System database, and can provide the maps electronically and at any appropriate scale. Regional Context Statements must contain a parcel-based map that identifies the regional Land Use Designations and Urban Containment Boundary within the municipality. All regional land use designations can be shown on one map. When submitting Regional Context Statements, municipalities are requested to also submit a GIS digital file to Metro Vancouver.
### Table 1 Summary of Mapping Elements to Include in Regional Context Statements: Required and Optional Elements

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Map Elements</th>
<th>Required</th>
<th>Optional</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>LAND USE DESIGNATIONS (parcel-based)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Urban</td>
<td>●</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial</td>
<td>●</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed Employment</td>
<td>●</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>●</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>●</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conservation and Recreation</td>
<td>●</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>URBAN CONTAINMENT BOUNDARY (parcel-based)</strong></td>
<td>●</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>OVERLAYS (parcel-based)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban Centres</td>
<td>●</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frequent Transit Development Areas * (if included)</td>
<td>●</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Routes for Goods and Service Vehicles (not parcel-based)</td>
<td>●</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>OVERLAYS (not parcel-based)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Centres</td>
<td>●</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Employment Areas</td>
<td>●</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>REFERENCE MAPS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Map 1 – Metro Vancouver Municipalities</td>
<td>●</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Map 9 – Greenway Network</td>
<td>●</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Map 10 – Natural Features</td>
<td>●</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Map 12 – Special Study Areas and Sewerage Extension Areas</td>
<td>●</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Map B.1 – Frequent Transit Network (FTN) Concept</td>
<td>●</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Map B.2-Major Roads Network (MRN), Highways</td>
<td>●</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note - Frequent Transit Development Areas are not required, but if included in the Regional Context Statement, should show parcel-based boundaries.

### 4.1.1 Boundary Adjustments for Regional Land Use Designations

The RGS provides municipalities with the flexibility to amend Official Community Plan land use designations without amending the Regional Context Statement under certain circumstances (see Section 6.2.7, p. 58 of the Regional Growth Strategy). Municipalities are requested to notify Metro Vancouver of any map changes that are made using this RGS provision. Metro Vancouver will update the Regional Growth Strategy maps, in consultation with municipalities, and maintain a record of those map changes.

In order to use the provisions in Section 6.2.7, Regional Context Statements must include language permitting amendments to Official Community Plans to adjust the boundaries of regional land use designations and must cite the circumstances outlined in 6.2.7 where this can occur. These clauses are necessary to ensure municipal Official Community Plans comply with the Local Government Act, Section 866(3) which says “A regional context statement under subsection (1) and the rest of the official community plan must be consistent.”
If a municipality wishes to make an OCP boundary adjustment, and the requisite language is not included in the Regional Context Statement, the OCP boundary adjustment would result in an inconsistency with the Regional Context Statement, and would thus necessitate a Regional Context Statement amendment.

Appendix 1 is a summary of the percentage of land in each regional land use designation, by municipality.

4.2 Regional Overlays

The Regional Growth Strategy contains the following overlays:

- Urban Centres
- Frequent Transit Development Areas (FTDAs)

4.2.1 Urban Centres

Urban Centres are the region’s primary focal points for concentrated growth and transit service. The general locations of Urban Centres are shown symbolically on RGS Map 2 (p. 11). Regional Context Statements must show the parcel-based boundaries of the Urban Centres. These boundaries should be generally consistent with the locations shown on Map 2 and the “Guidelines for Urban Centres and Frequent Transit Development Areas” in the RGS (Table 3, p. 19). As the Urban Centres are overlay boundaries only, the existing land use designations will remain and apply within the Urban Centre boundary. Urban Centres can be shown on the same map that shows regional Land Use Designations.

If a municipality wishes to add or delete an Urban Centre from RGS Map 2, a Regional Growth Strategy Type 2 Minor Amendment is required (see section 6.3.3, p. 60).

4.2.2 Frequent Transit Development Areas

Frequent Transit Development Areas are additional priority areas for accommodating growth, and as the name suggests, are located at appropriate locations along TransLink’s Frequent Transit Network. The FTDA concept is included in the RGS to provide more growth options in proximity to frequent transit service, to strengthen the connections between land use and transportation, and to support the investments made in frequent transit service. The FTDAs complement the Urban Centre network. As transit infrastructure grows over time, and as municipalities review their urban structure to accommodate growth, so too will the identification of FTDAs.

Regional Context Statements must indicate how the municipality intends to accommodate growth consistent with the Regional Growth Strategy. FTDAs may be a useful growth management concept in some municipalities, but other municipalities may have an Urban Centres-oriented urban structure and therefore may choose not to establish FTDAs.

It is anticipated that FTDAs will be determined by municipalities in consultation with Metro Vancouver and TransLink at the time of updating or amending their Official Community Plan and identifying locations for growth. FTDA locations should meet the “Guidelines for Urban Centres and Frequent Transit Development Areas” set out in Table 3 (p. 19) of the RGS.

If a municipality chooses to establish a FTDA, the municipalities must include TransLink’s comments on the proposed FTDA at the time of submitting the Regional Context Statement to the Metro Vancouver Board for acceptance.

While the term “FTDA” is used in the RGS and must be used in the Regional Context Statement, municipalities may refer to FTDAs in their OCPs with terminology that is more commonly used in their communities. “Station Areas,” “Transit Villages,” “Neighbourhood Centres,” “Transit-Oriented Development,” or “Transit-Oriented Community” or other similar terms may be used in the Official Community Plan.
Unlike Urban Centres, FTDA overlays are not yet identified on RGS Map 2. When FTDA overlays are established in Regional Context Statements, the general locations of the FTDA will be shown symbolically on RGS Map 2. Regional Context Statements must show the parcel-based boundaries of the FTDA in a manner generally consistent with the “Guidelines for Urban Centres and Frequent Transit Development Areas” in the RGS (Table 3).

Adding the general locations of FTDA to RGS Map 2 is a “Type 3 Amendment”. Metro Vancouver will initiate this Type 3 RGS amendment.

4.2.3 Boundary Adjustments for Regional Overlays
As noted above, Regional Context Statements must include parcel-based boundaries for the Urban Centre and Frequent Transit Development Area overlays. In certain circumstances municipalities may amend the boundaries of these overlays in an OCP without amending the Regional Context Statement (see Section 6.2.8, p. 59). Municipalities must include appropriate language within the Regional Context Statement in order to have this flexibility.

4.3 Additional Mapping Features: Local Centres and Special Employment Areas

4.3.1 Local Centres
Local Centres are smaller scale areas of activity, and provide a mix of housing types and local commercial services in communities. Local Centres are shown on RGS Map 11 (p. 48). Each municipality will elect whether or not to identify the general locations for Local Centres in Regional Context Statements. Parcel-based boundaries are not required. Map 11 is a reference map only and does not require municipalities to site Local Centres in particular locations, however, section 4.2.4(h) of the RGS emphasizes that Local Centres should preferably be located within Frequent Transit Development Areas.

From time to time, Metro Vancouver will add Local Centres to RGS Map 11 to add Local Centres that have been identified in accepted Regional Context Statements.

4.3.2 Special Employment Areas
Special Employment Areas are places in the region that are characterized by large amounts of employment activity and transportation trips, although they may also have a host of additional features, including housing, retail, recreation or other uses. Special Employment Areas are shown on Map 11 (p. 48). The map identifies four Special Employment Areas: British Columbia Institute of Technology (Burnaby campus), Simon Fraser University (Burnaby campus), University of British Columbia (Point Grey campus), and the Vancouver International Airport. Each municipality will elect whether or not to identify Special Employment Areas in its Regional Context Statement. Parcel-based boundaries are not required. Municipalities may wish to indicate the employment projections for the Special Employment Areas.

4.4 Reference Maps
The RGS contains a number of maps that have been included for reference:

- Map 1: Metro Vancouver Municipalities and Electoral Area
- Map 9: Regional Recreation Greenway Network
- Map 10: Natural Features and Land Cover
- Map 11: Local Centres, Hospitals and Post-Secondary Institutions
- Map B.1: Frequent Transit Network Concept
- Map B.2: Major Road Network, Highways and Gateways
These maps, and the information depicted on them, do not need to be referred to in the Regional Context Statements, although municipalities may find it useful to do so.

4.5 Special Study Areas and Sewerage Extension Areas

RGS Map 12 shows Special Study Areas and Sewerage Extension Areas. Sections 6.9 and 6.10 of the RGS are the relevant provisions for these areas. There is no requirement in the Regional Growth Strategy to map these areas or include reference to them in a Regional Context Statement.

4.6 Map Updates

Map amendments resulting from accepted Regional Context Statements and from boundary adjustments resulting from section 6.2.7 of the RGS will be processed under a “Type 3 – Minor Amendments to the Regional Growth Strategy” (section 6.3.4 (h)) process, as soon as practicable, or upon annual review of the RGS, whichever is sooner. Metro Vancouver will post amended maps on its website, and will distribute GIS digital files to municipalities upon request.
5 Population, Dwelling Unit and Employment Projections

A key aspect of the RGS is projecting future population, dwelling unit and employment growth distribution within the region. The projections are intended to establish general agreement among regional agencies and municipalities on growth expectations for the region, and to provide the basis for planning transportation and infrastructure improvements and investments at the regional and local levels.

Policy 1.1.3 (p. 14) indicates that Regional Context Statements are to include municipal population, dwelling unit and employment projections. The projections contained in Table A.1 (p. 68) are guidelines only. Regional Context Statements should reference these projections and indicate how the municipality intends to accommodate projected growth. The regional and municipal growth projections are expected to be used as guidance, and Regional Context Statements should attempt to illustrate the municipality’s best efforts to achieve the projections over time. Regional Context Statements should indicate growth projections for the same time periods as indicated in the RGS: 2021, 2031 and 2041.

The RGS contains dwelling unit and employment growth targets for Urban Centres and Frequent Transit Development Areas (Table 2, p. 18). These are policy targets and indicate Metro Vancouver’s emphasis on focusing growth in regionally-significant priority growth areas. These targets are intended to support future development of frequent transit service. Accordingly, these policy targets will be reviewed from time to time in response to updated growth forecasts, accepted Regional Context Statements, and the outcomes of strategic transportation planning processes.

With general guidance from RGS Table 2, Regional Context Statements must indicate the amount of dwelling unit growth and employment growth that a municipality is targeting for the Urban Centre(s) and Frequent Transit Development Area(s) within its boundaries. The Regional Context Statement may include a combined target for growth for all of the Urban Centres and all of the FTDAs within the municipality.

Metro Vancouver will continue to work with municipalities and offer technical assistance to jointly develop projections for Urban Centres and Frequent Transit Development Areas that reflect municipal planning considerations and meet regional growth objectives.

In Table 2 of the RGS, under “Dwelling Units,” regional totals are also provided for General Urban areas. Also in Table 2, dwelling unit totals have been combined for the non-urban designations of Rural, Agricultural, and Conservation and Recreation. Although not required, municipalities may include dwelling unit projections for General Urban areas and non-urban areas in Regional Context Statements.

In Table 2 of the RGS, under “Employment,” regional totals are also provided in the “All Other Areas” category and would include employment in all regional land use designations outside of Urban Centres and Frequent Transit Development Areas. Regional Context Statements may provide employment projections for areas outside of Urban Centres and Frequent Transit Development Areas.
6 Guidance on Selected RGS Strategies

Many of the RGS strategies and actions are self-explanatory; this section provides guidance for selected RGS strategies and actions.

6.1 GOAL 1
Create a Compact Urban Area

6.1.1 Strategy 1.3
Protect rural areas from urban development
Specifying densities and urban form for Rural areas

Under Policy 1.3.3(c)(i), the role of municipalities is to “specify the allowable density and form, consistent with Action 1.3.1, for land uses within the Rural land use designation.” The RGS does not specify any densities for the Rural land use designation, but instead sets out the region’s intention for Rural areas, as those that include “low density residential development, small scale commercial, industrial, and institutional uses, and agricultural uses that do not require the provision of urban services such as sewer or transit” (p. 9).

Previous to the adoption of the RGS, some rural lands were considered areas where future urban expansion was likely to occur. This is not the intent of the Rural designation in this RGS. The RGS recognizes that there are differences from one municipality to the next in how density and form are approached in Rural areas. Therefore, the RGS is flexible in how Regional Context Statements respond to the intent statements for the Rural land use designations. Regional Context Statements will set out density levels and urban form for Rural areas, or specify urban form that would not compromise the overall character, landscape or environmental qualities of the Rural area. Densities that would necessitate expansion to the sewer system are not consistent with the intent of the Rural area.

6.2 GOAL 2
Support a Sustainable Economy

6.2.1 Strategy 2.2
Protect the supply of industrial land
Encouraging higher density commercial development in Mixed Employment areas that are located in Urban Centres and FTDAs

Under Policy 2.2.4(d)(iv), the role of municipalities is to indicate “where Mixed Employment areas are located within Urban Centres or Frequent Transit Development Areas, support higher density commercial development and allow employment and service activities consistent with the intent of Urban Centres or Frequent Transit Development Areas” (p. 27).

The intent of this strategy is to reinforce the objective of locating job growth and services in areas with good transit service. Regional Context Statements therefore must include policies that encourage higher density commercial development to accommodate employment growth in Mixed Employment areas within Urban Centre or FTDAs overlays and discourage higher density commercial development in those Mixed Employment areas that are outside of Urban Centres or Frequent Transit Development Areas.

Conversely, Policy 2.2.4(d)(v) indicates that municipalities are required to include in Regional Context Statements policies for Mixed Employment areas which “allow low density infill/expansion based on currently accepted local plans and policies in Mixed Employment areas and support increases in density only where the Mixed Employment area has transit service or where an expansion of transit service has been identified in TransLink’s strategic transportation plans for the planned densities.”
The RGS recognizes municipalities may have existing local plans permitting expansion of Mixed Employment areas outside of Urban Centres and Frequent Transit Development Areas. However, in general, the RGS does not support increased densities of Mixed Employment areas outside of Urban Centres or FTDAs beyond what has been established in existing zoning.

6.2.2 Strategy 2.3
Protect the supply of agricultural land and promote agricultural viability with an emphasis on food production

Most of the land designated as Agriculture is located in the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR), but the regional designation also includes non-ALR land that has been designated for agriculture by municipalities. For municipalities that contain regionally designated Agricultural lands, there are a number of actions that Regional Context Statements must include (specifically section 2.3.6 (a), (b)(i), (ii), (iii), (iv), and (vi)).

The provincial Ministry of Agriculture has produced many resources to guide planning on agricultural lands (see Appendix 2– Resources for link to website). All municipalities, whether they have regionally designated Agricultural lands or not, are asked to respond to Strategy 2.3 by indicating support for economic development opportunities for agricultural operations (2.3.6(b) (v)), and support for educational programs on agriculture (2.3.6(b) (viii)).

6.3 GOAL 4
Develop Complete Communities

The RGS focuses on two strategies for developing complete communities: ensuring there is an adequate housing supply to meet future housing demand, and encouraging the development of neighbourhoods that are accessible for people of all ages and physical abilities, promote transit, cycling and walking and provide access to employment, social and cultural opportunities.

For Strategy 4.1 (Provide diverse and affordable housing choices), the RGS includes an estimate of future housing needs, and recognizes that meeting these needs depends on participation from all levels of government. Municipalities are the key to implementing this strategy because of their role in the development process. The intent of the strategy is to ensure that local OCPs align to support regional housing goals. Specifically, Regional Context Statements will need to address the actions required in section 4.1.7 (p. 46), which includes indicating how the municipality will work towards meeting the estimated future housing demand in the municipality.

While not required by the RGS, municipalities are requested to prepare and implement “Housing Action Plans.” The RGS sets out the general content for Housing Action Plans. Many municipalities have existing Housing Action Plans, or have adopted plans or policies that are similar in content. Metro Vancouver has committed to assisting municipalities in developing Housing Action Plans (section 4.1.2, p. 46). Housing Action Plans can be developed concurrently with Regional Context Statements. Alternatively, the municipality can indicate its anticipated timeline for completing its Housing Action Plan.
The RGS recognizes that accommodating growth will mean change over time for communities, and Strategy 4.2 (p. 47) identifies a number of policies to guide future development so that the result is healthy and complete communities. The RGS recognizes that municipalities have integrated healthy and complete community policies into their plans and programs. Each municipality will elect whether or not it wishes to address section 4.2.4 in its Regional Context Statement.

6.4 GOAL 5
Support Sustainable Transportation Choices

TransLink is the regional transportation authority responsible for planning, managing, and operating the regional transportation system. Under the South Coast British Columbia Transportation Authority Act (section 3) TransLink is required to “provide a regional transportation system that:

(a) moves people and goods, and
(b) supports

(i) The regional Growth Strategy
(ii) provincial and regional environmental objectives, including air quality and greenhouse gas emission reduction objectives, and
(iii) the economic development of transportation in the region.”

TransLink’s long range plan sets out goals and strategies for the regional road, transit, and cycling networks as well as other matters affecting the regional transportation system under the applicable legislation. The Regional Growth Strategy and regional transportation plans must be mutually reinforcing to be successful.

6.4.1 Strategy 5.1
Coordinate land use and transportation to encourage transit, multiple-occupancy vehicles, cycling and walking

Strategy 5.1 acknowledges TransLink’s mandate for preparing and implementing the regional transportation system and conveys to TransLink Metro Vancouver’s objectives for a transportation system that aligns with the goals of the RGS. To complement this, the RGS sets out actions that must be referenced in Regional Context Statements and includes examples of policies and programs that would achieve them (e.g. encouraging a greater share of trips made by transit, multiple-occupancy vehicles, cycling and walking, developing and implementing transportation demand management strategies, and enhancing municipal infrastructure to support other modes of transportation).

6.4.2 Strategy 5.2
Coordinate land use and transportation to support the safe and efficient movement of vehicles for passengers, goods and services

Identifying goods and service vehicle routes on a map

Under Policy 5.2.3(a) the role of municipalities is to “identify routes on a map for the safe and efficient movement of goods and service vehicles to, from, and within Urban Centres, Frequent Transit Development Areas, Industrial, Mixed Employment and Agricultural areas, Special Employment Areas, ports, airports, and international border crossings.”

Therefore, Regional Context Statements need to
include a map that shows the areas listed in the policy, and identify routes for goods and service vehicles. Routes should include the Major Road Network elements shown in Map B.2 (a reference map, which is updated by TransLink from time to time). As routes are shown for reference, a change in the route, either by TransLink or by the municipality, does not require a change to the Regional Context Statement.

6.4.3 TransLink’s Frequent Transit Network
Reference to “TransLink’s Frequent Transit Network” (FTN) is made throughout the Regional Growth Strategy. The FTN is a concept developed, managed and implemented by TransLink in consultation with the municipalities. TransLink has provided this explanation for the FTN, which can be found on page 19 of the RGS:

“TransLink’s Frequent Transit Network is a part of the regional transit system that provides frequent, reliable transit service on designated corridors throughout the day, every day. The Frequent Transit Network comprises a family of services, including rapid transit (busways/rail) and frequent local and limited stop transit service. For more information refer to Appendix Map B.1: Frequent Transit Network Concept (provided by TransLink).”

Over time, the FTN corridors and service levels will change. TransLink strategic plans should be consulted for updated information on the current and planned FTN. Metro Vancouver will endeavour to keep the RGS concurrent with transportation planning initiatives, including changes to the FTN, however, as municipalities consider development of their Regional Context Statements, consultation with TransLink on the status of the FTN for portions in their municipality is advised.
7 Format of Regional Context Statement

Municipalities can format their Regional Context Statement in a manner that best suits their needs and the format of their Official Community Plan. Some municipalities may choose to write the Regional Context Statement in a prose-style, while others may use a table format that outlines the Regional Growth Strategy’s municipal roles as one column, with corresponding OCP responses in another column. Specific reference to the corresponding OCP policy should be provided. Regional Context Statements should acknowledge all of the items for municipalities set out in the RGS. If a municipality is unable to respond to a particular item, the Regional Context Statement should set out an explanation as to why the Regional Context Statement does not respond, or alternatively, how the municipality’s OCP will be made consistent with the action over time.

Regional Context Statements are not “stand alone” documents, and must be included in the Official Community Plan bylaw. They may be included as a chapter or an appendix within an OCP.
APPENDIX 1 Regional Land Use Designation Areas by Municipality

As per RGS section 6.2.7, municipalities may re-designate up to two percent of land within each regional land use designation. This table shows the amount of land and the two percent limit, in each designation, for each municipality.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Agricultural</th>
<th>Conservation &amp; Recreation</th>
<th>Industrial</th>
<th>Mixed Employment</th>
<th>Rural</th>
<th>Urban</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hectares 2%</td>
<td>Hectares 2%</td>
<td>Hectares 2%</td>
<td>Hectares 2%</td>
<td>Hectares 2%</td>
<td>Hectares 2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anmore</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>2,242</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>507</td>
<td>10.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belcarra</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>371</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burnaby</td>
<td>152</td>
<td>1783</td>
<td>35.7</td>
<td>534</td>
<td>627</td>
<td>12.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coquitlam</td>
<td>355</td>
<td>6,240</td>
<td>124.8</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>298</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delta</td>
<td>9,371</td>
<td>3,875</td>
<td>77.5</td>
<td>1,612</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electoral Area A</td>
<td>598</td>
<td>75,531</td>
<td>1,510.6</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Langley City</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Langley Township</td>
<td>21,321</td>
<td>1,335</td>
<td>26.7</td>
<td>815</td>
<td>256</td>
<td>5.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lions Bay</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maple Ridge</td>
<td>3,547</td>
<td>15,674</td>
<td>313.5</td>
<td>621</td>
<td>3,128</td>
<td>62.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Westminster</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Vancouver</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>12,254</td>
<td>245.1</td>
<td>192</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Vancouver District</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>12,254</td>
<td>245.1</td>
<td>192</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pitt Meadows</td>
<td>5,287</td>
<td>1,747</td>
<td>34.9</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>781</td>
<td>15.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Port Coquitlam</td>
<td>334</td>
<td>646</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td>457</td>
<td>457</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Port Moody</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>1,143</td>
<td>22.9</td>
<td>469</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richmond</td>
<td>4,580</td>
<td>1,090</td>
<td>21.8</td>
<td>2,301</td>
<td>562</td>
<td>11.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surrey</td>
<td>9,263</td>
<td>1,648</td>
<td>33.0</td>
<td>1,829</td>
<td>1,258</td>
<td>25.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tsawwassen First Nation</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UBC UEL</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>800</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vancouver</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>946</td>
<td>18.9</td>
<td>673</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Vancouver</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>4,545</td>
<td>90.9</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White Rock</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Hectares</td>
<td>55,313</td>
<td>132,351</td>
<td>10,207</td>
<td>3,406</td>
<td>8,487</td>
<td>70,856</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes:

1. All land use designation figures refer to gross land area within that designation. Gross land area includes all properties and rights-of-ways within the boundaries of the designation.
2. Metro Vancouver will track amendments to land use designations and land area that is changed under sections 6.2.7 and 6.2.8 of the Regional Growth Strategy.
APPENDIX 2 Resources

METRO VANCOUVER REGIONAL GROWTH STRATEGY, RELATED REPORTS, MAPS AND GUIDELINES:
www.metrovancouver.org/planning/development/strategy/Pages/default.aspx

MUNICIPAL REGIONAL CONTEXT STATEMENTS AND OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLANS:
www.metrovancouver.org/planning/development/strategy/Pages/RegionalContextStatements.aspx

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT:

REGIONAL GROWTH STRATEGIES REGULATION:

MINISTRY OF COMMUNITY, SPORT & CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT WEBSITE AND RESOURCES:
www.cscd.gov.bc.ca/lgd/planning/growth_strategies.htm

TRANSLINK
Transport 2040 (Regional Transport Strategy)
Can be found at: www.translink.ca

MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE RESOURCES:
Guide to Bylaw Development in Farm Areas (2011)
Guide to Edge Planning (2009)
A Guide to Using and Developing Trails in Farm and Ranch Areas (2006)
Can be found at: www.agf.gov.bc.ca/resmgmt/sf/Publications.htm#plan_ag

AGRICULTURAL LAND COMMISSION
Planning for Agriculture (1998)
Can be found at: www.alc.gov.bc.ca/publications/publications.htm