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**The Capital Regional District Growth Strategy:
Herding Cats onto the Road to Sustainability**

by

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The Assessment and Planning Project

Over the past decade or so, several Canadian jurisdictions have moved to integrate environmental considerations more effectively in land use planning. Many of the most promising initiatives have been in the southern parts of Ontario and British Columbia, which face significant population increases and associated urban pressures. The approaches taken by government authorities and citizens in these two areas have differed significantly in their application of environmental assessment and planning principles, their adoption of authoritative and consensus-based processes and their response to provincial action and community initiatives.

The Assessment and Planning research project, initially funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, seeks to learn from experiences in the two provinces. Part of the work centres on a series of case studies covering a range of initiatives in the two provinces. *The Capital Regional District Growth Strategy: Herding Cats onto the Road to Sustainability* is the report on the sixth British Columbia study. For other case studies and publications of the project, contact the project co-ordinator and case study series editor, Dr. Robert Gibson, Environment and Resource Studies (ERS), University of Waterloo, Waterloo, Ontario, Canada N2L 3G1, or see the project site: <http://www.fes.uwaterloo.ca/research/asmtplan>.

The Capital Regional District Growth Strategy study

In 1995 the provincial government of British Columbia, Canada, passed new legislation encouraging regional districts to prepare Regional Growth Strategies. The strategies were to facilitate co-ordinated municipal action on regional issues in the pursuit of sustainability objectives, including reducing urban sprawl, protecting environmentally sensitive areas, providing affordable housing and decreasing pollution. This paper examines the experience so far in one region that chose to prepare a growth strategy: the Capital Regional District (CRD) at the south end of Vancouver Island.

Growth management planning in the CRD is both critical and difficult. The region expects substantial population increase in the next couple of decades and has a limited and vulnerable land base for expansion. But the province does not have a tradition of strong regional governance and the CRD as a regional authority is the creature of sixteen municipalities and electoral areas. Because the region now offers a high quality of life, public commitment to effective growth management is a significant factor. Indeed, of all the regions of British Columbia that face serious growth pressures, the CRD is perhaps the one that should be most receptive and innovative in implementing a Regional Growth Strategy. Seven years into the process, effective growth management still faces substantial challenges, including the persistent jurisdictional protectionism of CRD municipalities. Nevertheless, there have been positive achievements and an admirable diversity of individuals, organisations and initiatives continue to push municipal and regional officials towards a more sustainable future. While the achievements so far have fallen short of some expectations and apparent needs, they are clearly positive steps in the direction of a more sustainable regional future.

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Herding Cats onto the Road to Sustainability

An Evaluation of the Capital Regional District Growth Strategy

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INTRODUCTION

Especially over the last few decades, growth in human numbers and their extractive, consumptive and waste generating activities, has brought deepening concerns about the continued viability of valued social qualities and ecological systems. It is evident that current trends are not sustainable globally or, in many places, locally. Problematic growth in urban centres and surrounding regions is a subset of this larger problem. There are many contributing factors. Automobile production, for example, has been adding almost 50 million new vehicles per year. In some major cities, the number of private automobiles has doubled in just two decades (Zovanyi, 1998), bringing more pollution and energy use (even though individual vehicles are increasingly efficient), more paved surfaces, more dispersed urban expansion, and a weakening of public transit. These effects combine with host of a similarly worrisome trends such as increasing water use, overall consumption and waste generation, pressures on agricultural lands and greenspaces, income disparity and perceived insecurity.

One response, not surprisingly, is experimentation with approaches to urban growth management. In Canada, some of the most significant growth management initiatives have been in southern British Columbia. Throughout the 1990s, British Columbia's population rose by about 100,000 people per year with the increase concentrated in the urban and urbanizing areas of the Lower Mainland, Okanagan and Southeastern Vancouver Island (MMA, March 1999). As in most of North America, this population growth in British Columbia has generally meant sprawling residential development, increased automobile use and inefficient land use patterns that transform agricultural land and green space into built areas (Sandborn, 1996; Fodor, 1999).

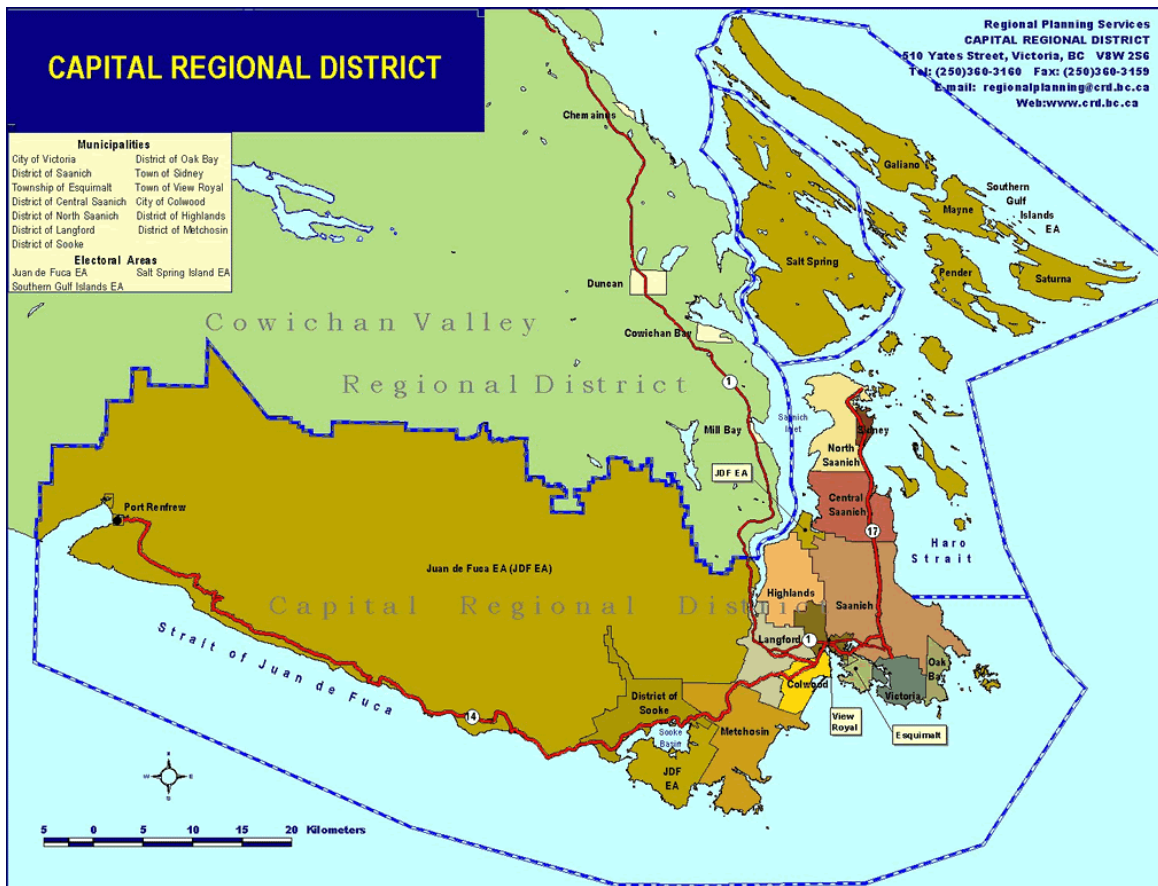
The Capital Regional District (CRD) of Southeastern Vancouver Island (Figure 1), centred on the provincial capital, Victoria, is one of several British Columbia regional jurisdictions now working to manage the on-going and anticipated growth. Several regional districts in the province already have regional growth strategies in place and several others are in the works.¹ But while the Capital Regional District's strategy will not be the first of its kind, there are reasons to expect it to be the most ambitious.

Growth management planning in the CRD is driven in part by demographic and physical realities. Its population is expected to increase by an estimated 28 percent in the next 25 to 30 years. However, because it is bordered on three sides by water and one side by mountains, the region has a limited land base available to accommodate expansion. Perhaps even more importantly, CRD residents recognize that their region has natural, social and economic characteristics that they wish to retain. The high level of public, private and government commitment to maintaining current qualities in the face of

¹ Regional growth strategies are now in place in the Greater Vancouver Regional District (GVRD), Regional District of Nanaimo, Central Okanagan Regional District and Thompson-Nicola Regional District. The GVRD work is discussed in another report in this series: Ray Tomalty, *Growth Management in the Vancouver Region The Assessment and Planning Project*, British Columbia Case Report No. 4 (Waterloo: Integrating the Environment into Planning for Growth Study, ERS/UWaterloo, March 2002), 27pp. [<http://www.fes.uwaterloo.ca/research/asmtplan/bcmain.html>].

increasing population and associated growth pressures gives the CRD an unusually strong base for growth management. Some challenges are involved as well. Growth management to maintain quality of life and build greater sustainability entails some substantial shifts from current trends and established practice. Moreover, the organizing body in this case, the CRD, is a politically delicate partnership of 13 municipal governments and three unincorporated electoral areas, which have predictably divergent inclinations, priorities and interests (Figure 1). Nevertheless, strong public awareness of quality of life threats, and associated motivations to resist expansionary pressures put the Victoria area in an exceptional position; if effective growth management cannot be accomplished in the CRD, the prospects for success elsewhere in British Columbia are not good.

Figure 1: The Capital Regional District



Source: Capital Regional District < <http://www.crd.bc.ca/govlink.htm>>

Many growth-related initiatives have been undertaken at the local and municipal level in the CRD. But the focus of overall growth management efforts has been the Regional District's process of designing and adopting a CRD Regional Growth Strategy, which if successful will establish common goals for municipal action to define the region's social, economic and ecological future (MMA, 1995).

This case report examines growth management initiatives in the CRD, focusing especially on the Regional Growth Strategy initiative. We consider two main questions: does the CRD Regional Growth Strategy promise to be an adequate tool for incorporating broadly defined sustainability considerations into land-use planning and decision making, and can this strategy serve as a model or base for other initiatives addressing growth pressures in Southeastern Vancouver Island and elsewhere?

Research for this report involved extensive literature review and key informant interviews relevant to the Regional Growth Strategy and selected initiatives outlined in this case study. The study aims to promote better understanding of growth management as a vehicle for integrating sustainability considerations into land use.

BACKGROUND

Growth Management and Planning

Economic growth is conventionally accepted as a means and indication of progress. Celebrants of growth see it as a desirable social and economic force that more or less automatically moves society towards increased material accumulation and well being. There are doubters, however. Especially since the late 1960s, critics have pointed to negative consequences for both social and ecological systems (Zovanyi, 1998). In many urban and rural areas local citizens motivated by concerns about community disruption and environmental degradation have resisted "development" projects of various kinds (Porter, 1986; Deakin, 1989; Kushner, 1994; Zovanyi, 1998). In some cases, these actions have reflected a broader suspicion that on a finite planet, or at least in a finite community or region, future growth in human demands will be increasingly destructive. In others, the objective has been merely to guide expansion in ways that avoid or mitigate public or private damage and enhance public or private benefits.

Growth management, accordingly, has been approached in two ways. According to Porter (1986: 1),

In some circles, growth management programs suggested broadly comprehensive and meticulously detailed direction by public entities of the pace, location, and quality of development – the classic "management" scenario. In other circles, growth management techniques were seen, quite simply, as means to slow growth or stop it altogether.

Early growth restrictions focused on restrictive zoning, agricultural boundaries and subdivision controls. But as cities expanded, development became increasingly complex, demanding more comprehensive approaches to land use planning and management (Deakin, 1991). At the same time, urban decision makers faced pressures to address a broadening set of concerns - affordable housing, traffic congestion, and the loss of rural and natural space, etc. The result has been a "second wave" of growth management that is expected to cover not just all factors that affect growth patterns, but also all considerations that affect long-term community and ecological sustainability (Meeks, 1990).

Today, growth management is being incorporated into planning across North America as more communities strive to accommodate, even encourage, continued growth in ways that respect fundamental concerns for ecological protection and social quality. Commitment to the integration of a strong economy, healthy environment and livable communities has shaped the most recent growth management strategies (Diamond, 1996). The word "integration" is crucial here. One commentator defines growth management as "a calculated effort by local government, region, or state to achieve a *balance* between natural systems – land, air, and water – and residential, commercial, and industrial development" (DeGrove, 1991: xii). But the concept of balance implies sacrificing one objective for another to keep them all in balance. In contrast, growth management for sustainability recognizes that economic, social and ecological objectives are

interdependent. The quality of human life requires not that these objectives be balanced but that they be recognized as mutually supportive and pursued together.

Growth management for sustainability is easier to state as a principle than to apply in practice. This is in part because the practical implications are not always obvious. But the greater challenge is to supplant established development processes that have little or no regard for sustainability considerations. For citizens as well as professional planners and government decision makers, growth management for sustainability requires invention of an essentially new way to shape and design their communities to meet long-term quality of life criteria. Not surprisingly, initial growth management efforts so far have often been tentative and incomplete steps in the right direction. Nevertheless, the Box 1 list of substantive principles behind recent growth management strategies indicates that these efforts have been comprehensive enough to include and perhaps integrate a range of economic, social and ecological factors.

Box 1: Substantive Principles of Recent Growth Management Strategies

- Anticipatory provision of infrastructure rather than reactive action after development impacts occur
- Strategies to discourage urban sprawl and encourage compact urban development, infill, redevelopment and the revitalization of central cities
- Policies and programmes to assure that affordable housing is a defined and major component of the growth management system
- Economic development strategies including efforts to promote economic development in areas that need it
- Policies and programmes that protect rural areas, including farm and forest lands, environmentally sensitive areas and open space
- Urban form requirements that aim at aesthetically pleasant urban areas that combine moderate densities with people- and environmentally-friendly places

Source: DeGrove, 1992: 4

The focus of these principles is clearly local and regional. While action to apply the principles could help reduce overall stresses on biospheric resources and perhaps inspire co-operative international growth management initiatives, global considerations have so far rarely been included among the explicit objectives of growth management strategies.

Incorporating Sustainability Considerations into Planning for Growth

Sustainability is fundamentally a matter of applied ethics. It has a human focus, but involves consideration of future as well as present interests and recognizes ultimate human dependence on the biosphere. Arguably, commitment to sustainability entails adoption of what Aldo Leopold called a "land ethic" (Leopold, 1966: 239) – extending the

definition of community from the social interaction of individuals to the linking of all components of the natural world, and requiring people to view themselves as stewards of the land.

Recent discussion of sustainability is also rooted in attention to the tension between development needs and development effects – between often unmet human needs for economic improvements to provide material sufficiency and security, and simultaneous needs to protect and rehabilitate natural resources and ecological systems. After publication of the Brundtland Commission's report, *Our Common Future* (WCED, 1987), many governments expressed commitment to "sustainable development". In Canada, this commitment was voiced at almost every level of government policy making, as well as in the spread of local and national level round tables on the environment and economy across the country.

The practical meaning of commitment to sustainability and development in wealthy nations has been much debated. Some of the underlying difficulties have been highlighted by application of the "ecological footprint" concept, which involves calculating the total land and associated resources upon which a population relies given its current consumptive behaviour (Wackernagel and Rees, 1996). Not surprisingly, it reveals that North American regions draw heavily upon resources from beyond their boundaries and several additional planets would be required if the global population were to consume at that level. The clear message is that growth trends based on assumptions of infinite access to natural resources and continuous expansion of material accumulation are neither practically nor morally viable.

In response, progressive planners have begun to focus on "sustainability" rather than "sustainable development," stressing the durability of quality of life priorities such as ecological protection and social equity, over desires for economic expansion (Mitchell, 1997). Economic considerations are not neglected. But they are linked with efforts to enhance infrastructure and service efficiencies and to reduce material demand by, for example, encouraging densification rather than sprawl and favouring public transit over the private automobile. As well, sustainability-oriented planners are opening the planning process to broader participation and adopting more integrated planning styles that seek to foster and apply a comprehensive, ecosystem-based understanding of the complex social, economic and ecological components of growth planning (Gibson *et al.*, 1997). These ideas are reflected in, for example, Roseland's description of the Eco-City concept summarized in Box 2.

Box 2: The Eco-City

The eco-city vision links ecological sustainability with social justice and the pursuit of sustainable livelihoods. It is a vision that acknowledges the ecological limits to growth, promotes ecological and cultural diversity and a vibrant community life, and supports a community-based, sustainable economy that is directed toward fulfilling real human needs, rather than just simply expanding. Building eco-cities requires access to decision-making processes to ensure that economic and political institutions promote activities that are ecologically sustainable and socially just. It requires that these institutions

respect our needs as whole human beings and citizens, not just as producers, consumers, and voters.

Source: Roseland, 1997: 12

Planning for Sustainability at the Local Level

Sustainability is not an end so much as a moving target for long-term planning. Robinson *et al.* (1990: 39) define sustainability as "the persistence over an apparently indefinite future of certain necessary and desired characteristics of the socio-political system and its natural environment." But what is necessary and desirable is not fixed. While the contents are to some extent determined by the biophysical realities of human life, they are also affected by evolving cultural qualities and public choice.

Growth management strategies that focus on the concept of urban sustainability emphasize the need to protect the human communities as well as the natural environment of a region in order to ensure overall ecological, social and economic health (Curran 1999a). Natural environments encompass not just valued ecosystem components – plants and animals, rivers and lakes, the air we breathe, and the ocean that surrounds us – but also the ecological systems in which these components participate. Community environments similarly include not only individuals and their established social, economic and political relations but also the larger system of the community's history and hopes, including the built environment that stands as a record of previous generations as well as an indicator of trends towards the future (Larsen *et al.*, 1991).

The concept of sustainable communities has become increasingly popular in planning initiatives that seek to promote a more socially and ecologically responsible approach to growth and development. In a rapidly changing and uncertain world, there is an increasing desire to adopt a more local approach, particularly at a neighbourhood level where people feel a connection based on shared identity and common values. Local growth management is, however, not just about protecting communities and natural environments. Both may also need restoration and rehabilitation, strengthening for greater resilience, and adjustments to facilitate pursuit of new opportunities as well as to accommodate growth pressures.

Nozick (1992: 7) defines "sustainable community development" as a process of rediscovering "the particulars of place, the reclaiming of home, community and local responsibility." Such development aims to foster communities that are economically, environmentally and socially more "self-supporting," and "worth preserving" because of their particular cultural and natural character, and their success in fostering a sense of place (Nozick, 1992). Development of this kind allows for the building of a shared local culture that encompasses history, values and traditions of a particular place or region. It also requires that individual communities define for themselves what constitutes sustainability given their social, cultural, economic and environmental uniqueness. Roseland (1998: 14) states that "rather than being a fixed thing, a sustainable community is continually adjusting to meet the social and economic needs of its residents while preserving the environment's ability to support it." This process begins with local level initiatives to identify and evaluate desirable futures.

While the principle of community development and local involvement is often emphasized by advocates of urban sustainability, there are difficulties. In particular, it is clear that what local communities may choose to favour is not necessarily what is in the best interest of sustainability for the larger region.

For example, the ecological and social aspects of long-term urban sustainability objectives require generally that communities facing growth pressures encourage compactness rather than sprawl and discourage automobile dependency (Curran 1999a; Roseland, 1997). For ecological sustainability, communities should not only protect and restore natural areas, but also infill core neighbourhoods to enhance land use efficiency, facilitate alternative modes of transportation such as bicycling and walking, and ensure convenient access to employment, markets, recreational opportunities, transportation links and other services. For social sustainability, communities should encourage diverse community structures and promote affordable and safe neighbourhood designs. Finally, for both ecological and social reasons, communities should favour economic initiatives that strengthen the community-based capacity for achieving social and ecological sustainability while helping to reduce overall pressures on global systems.

Not all communities will choose to participate in sustainability initiatives of this kind. Communities that are economically advantaged, committed to a low-density structure and ideologically devoted to the prospect of possible financial gain through increased private property values, may well support infilling and affordable housing in other communities but resist them at home. They may also seek new expressways and solicit ecologically regrettable industries for location elsewhere. There is no simple answer to this problem. Education, suasion, regulatory changes and revision of economic incentives (e.g. in infrastructure pricing and servicing fees) may all be needed. But one attractive option is enhancement of a regional role in growth management planning.

Regional Growth Management

The increasing role of regional bodies in growth management stems from an understanding that the effects of growth are not limited to individual communities, and may be addressed more effectively beyond municipal boundaries (Stein, 1993; Baldassare *et al.*, 1996; Siemon, 1997). Traditionally, regional level action for sustainability or other shared objectives has been difficult due to fragmented jurisdictional boundaries, limited municipal mandates to examine broader ecological and social concerns, and difficulties achieving consensus among communities with divergent interests. However, it has also been recognized that growth management effectiveness often suffers if regional level governance bodies have insufficient regulatory authority, professional capacity and financial resources.

In a gentle move to foster and enable greater regional authority in growth-related matters, the British Columbia legislature passed the *Growth Strategies Statutes Amendment Act* in June 1995 (BC, 1996). The overall aim of the Act is to facilitate better co-ordination of municipalities, regional districts and the provincial government to deal with complex growth management issues. But its most significant provisions centre on the regional level. The *Act* gives "legislative authority for regional districts to voluntarily develop and adopt a Regional Growth Strategy" (FRMB, 1995).

British Columbia's *Growth Strategies Act*

Urban and regional planning systems in British Columbia have gone through several important changes over the past few decades. Traditionally, municipalities in the province have enjoyed considerable autonomy, even where this meant independent and ill-co-ordinated decision making by adjoining municipal authorities. In 1966, the province introduced "regional districts" as regional-scale governance bodies that would act as vehicles for joint planning and initiative by municipalities on matters that crossed municipal boundaries and required a regional perspective. The regional districts were empowered to adopt Official Regional Plans and the member municipalities' Official Community Plans were to comply with these regional plans. But these arrangements did not resolve the underlying tensions and the results included several court cases centred on municipal challenges to what they perceived to be excessive regional interference in local planning. In 1983, the province eliminated the regional districts' authority for regional planning.

In an attempt to develop a more comprehensive approach to land use in the mid-80s, the provincial government moved to centralize planning at the provincial level. However, this approach met municipal level hostility and was soon dismantled. No regional or provincial co-ordination was required for over a decade (MMA, 1995), though some effective provincial control over growth factors was and continues to be exercised especially through provincial involvement in public transit planning and management (through the provincial crown agency, BC Transit), and through legislation restricting urban expansion into designated farm lands (the Agricultural Land Reserve). Finally, in 1992 the province decided to reintroduce regional growth management planning in a more co-operative form through legislation providing for regional growth strategies.

The 1995 *Growth Strategies Statutes Amendment Act* created a new section in British Columbia's *Municipal Act* that aims encourage, guide and facilitate regional growth management planning in ways that would minimize local government hostility while still ensuring at least the potential for effective regional planning. The *Growth Strategies Act* was explicitly designed not to impose the kind of centralized regional planning that had failed in the past (SCARP, 2000). It instead focuses on co-operative development of regional growth strategies in a process backed by a set of dispute resolution mechanisms.

Box 3: The Three Main *Growth Strategies Act* Instruments

Regional Growth Strategy (RGS): a regional vision that commits affected municipalities and regional districts to a course of action to meet common social, economic and environmental objectives. It is initiated and adopted by a regional district and referred to all affected local governments for acceptance.

Regional Context Statement (RCS): forms a portion of a municipality's Official Community Plan that sets out the relationship between the Regional Growth Strategy and

the municipality's plan. This statement is prepared by the municipality and referred to the regional district for acceptance.

Implementation Agreement (IA): is a partnership agreement between a regional district and other levels of government, their agencies or other bodies which spells out the details of how certain aspects of the Regional Growth Strategy will be carried out.

Source: Ministry of Municipal Affairs (MMA), 1995: 2

Regional growth strategies outline the regional vision for at least the next 20 years. Once a Regional Growth Strategy is in place, its application is to be accomplished chiefly through adjustments to the official community plans of the relevant municipalities. The municipalities are required to include a "regional context statement" in each official community plan, showing how the plan does, or will in time, comply with the strategy. As well, the law provides for "implementation agreements" between local governments and other levels of government and agencies to facilitate implementation of particular components of the strategy (see Box 3).

While the legislation aims to foster willing municipal agreement on Regional Growth Strategy development and implementation, it also recognizes the virtual inevitability of conflict over the specifics if not the general philosophy of regional growth management. The co-operative strategy development process requires local governments to consider and seek agreement on common goals and then work together with the relevant regional government on implementation. But the legislators were well aware of the long history of local/regional planning tensions. They therefore supported the agreement seeking process with a progressive series of dispute resolution mechanisms. Almost half of the new law is devoted to provisions for increasingly firm means of resolving conflict – from initial assistance with mediating disagreements among the parties, to arbitration to deal with otherwise irresolvable differences (e.g. where one or several municipalities decide not to sign onto a strategy or where the region rejects a municipality's plans for applying the strategy).

In this way, the *Growth Strategies Act* approach attempts to establish a form of effective regional authority without setting regional districts as a new tier of government higher than the municipalities. In the prevailing "municipal partnership model" of regional governance in British Columbia, the regional district is essentially equivalent in status to the municipalities. The boards of directors of regional districts are made up of representatives of the constituent municipalities and any unincorporated electoral areas in the district. Only the electoral area representatives are elected directly. The municipal representatives are elected councillors chosen by their respective councils to represent the municipality on the regional board. As such, a regional district developing agreement on the elements and scope of a Regional Growth Strategy is responding to the direction of individual municipalities involved. Given the history of, and predictable triggers for, inter-municipal discord on regional issues, much depends on the countervailing pressures for effective growth management and on the adequacy of the dispute resolution provisions of the *Growth Strategies Act*.

The core objective of the *Growth Strategies Act* is "to promote human settlement that is socially, economically and environmentally healthy and that makes efficient use of

public facilities and services, land and other resources" (BC, 1996; s.849 (1)). This purpose is elaborated in 14 laudable objectives that set out an implicit sustainability agenda (see Box 4). However, the law does not require regional districts to show how they will contribute to the progress to each of these objectives through their growth strategies.

Box 4: Goals for Regional Growth Strategies

- (a) avoiding urban sprawl and ensuring that development takes place where adequate facilities exist or can be provided in a timely, economic and efficient manner;
- (b) settlement patterns that minimize the use of automobiles and encourage walking, bicycling and the efficient use of public transit;
- (c) the efficient movement of goods and people while making effective use of transportation and utility corridors;
- (d) protecting environmentally sensitive areas;
- (e) maintaining the integrity of a secure and productive resource base, including the agricultural and forest land reserves;
- (f) economic development that supports the unique character of communities;
- (g) reducing and preventing air, land and water pollution;
- (h) adequate, affordable and appropriate housing;
- (i) adequate inventories of suitable land and resources for future settlement;
- (j) protecting the quality and quantity of ground water and surface water;
- (k) settlement patterns that minimize the risks associated with natural hazards;
- (l) preserving, creating and linking urban and rural open space including parks and recreation areas;
- (m) planning for energy supply and promoting efficient use, conservation and alternative forms of energy;
- (n) good stewardship of land, sites and structures with cultural heritage value.

Source: British Columbia *Municipal Act*, part 25, Regional Growth Strategies, s.849 (2)

The new law established a number of requirements that regional governments must meet prior to adopting a growth strategy. A Regional Growth Strategy must use a 20 year time frame, be comprehensive enough to include social, economic and environmental considerations, and include adequate population and employment projections. As well, all regional growth strategies must "provide for the needs of the projected population" in relation to the five essential elements of housing, transportation, regional district services, parks and natural areas, and economic development [section 850(2)]. At the same time, however, regional districts are allowed a high degree of flexibility in order to meet the needs of the local community [section 850(3)]. A Regional Growth Strategy can address any issue that the participants consider significant. According to provincial municipal officials, the Regional Growth Strategy legislation "enables regions to custom design a strategy that fits local circumstances and objectives by adding other matters which cross local government boundaries and cannot be managed solely by one jurisdiction" (MMA, 1995: 5).

This approach to growth management was meant to address the need for regional co-ordination in the face of concerns that transfer of political authority to the regional level would undermine local control and fail to deliver promised new efficiencies (Baldassare *et al.*, 1996). The law aimed to give both the regional districts and the municipalities greater responsibility for setting and enforcing policies and standards for regional sustainability, and to encourage establishment of "inter-agency co-ordination mechanisms" that increase efficiency while allowing for municipal level flexibility to form new partnerships (FRMB, 1995). And while the dispute resolution mechanisms strengthened prospects for reaching agreement, the basic approach to the development of regional growth strategies remained largely voluntary, with great flexibility concerning the contents of the growth strategies, and considerable latitude in implementation.

Arguably, these qualities are the best and worst attributes of the Regional Growth Strategy mechanism. The non-mandatory encouragement of sustainability objectives, the emphasis on willing agreement, and the effective retention of municipal level authority make attention to regional growth issues less threatening and promise more willing participation by municipalities. But they also raise questions about the possible strength and influence of the regional growth strategies that result.

The Regional Growth Strategy mechanism is extremely permissive. The law allows local governments to undertake a comprehensive sustainability process and strategy, but aside from general guiding principles, it focuses primarily on process. Municipalities are required to do very little. Under the title of growth management, regional districts may choose to agree only to make very modest adjustments to business as usual. The formal requirements for public consultation during strategy preparation are simply a public consultation plan and a public hearing once a Regional Growth Strategy has been accepted by all member municipalities. There are no restrictions on the nature of compromises that may be allowed to achieve agreement with recalcitrant municipalities while a strategy is being finalized or during implementation. Once a Regional Growth Strategy is in place, the law requires member municipalities to ensure their official community plans comply with the regional strategy. But conflicts can be resolved by amending the growth strategy as well as by amending the local plan.

Clearly the growth management process, as established by British Columbia's *Growth Strategies Act*, is unlikely to be sufficient by itself. The encouragements of the

law, the gains in understanding likely to come from mutual deliberations on shared issues, and the progressive series of conflict resolution mechanisms should all help to foster more serious and effective attention to growth concerns. Still, following the process laid out by the legislation, a region and its constituent municipalities could be paragons of sustainability or pariahs of unmitigated sprawl. Even with the new law, effective growth management seems likely to rely heavily on the goodwill and commitment of municipal governments and the electorate they face every three years.

If the necessary goodwill and commitment are to be found anywhere in British Columbia, they are to be found among the municipal leaders and residents of the Capital Regional District given the long standing concern for quality of life issues in this region. What happens in the CRD will therefore be an important test of the Regional Growth Strategies mechanism. If effective growth management using the regional growth strategies mechanism cannot be accomplished in the CRD, it is unlikely that the mechanism will work well anywhere in the province.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

As noted above, this research project addresses two questions: does the CRD Regional Growth Strategy promise to be an adequate tool for incorporating broadly defined sustainability considerations into land-use planning and decision making, and can this strategy serve as a model or base for other initiatives addressing growth pressures in Southeastern Vancouver Island and elsewhere. While we have focused on the metropolitan areas and subregions of the CRD, we have also considered links to, and implications for, the larger growth management and sustainability context beyond Victoria and British Columbia.

Data for this research were drawn from an extensive literature review of material pertaining to growth management strategies in general, as well as material directly related to the CRD case. Information was also gathered through interviews with key informants knowledgeable about the CRD's Regional Growth Strategy and related initiatives, and through many less formal discussions with other participants and observers.

The central consideration in this study is sustainability. We are interested in whether the CRD Regional Growth Strategy efforts will foster progress to practices and conditions that are desirable and viable over the long term. Because "sustainability" is a notoriously fuzzy concept, and because no universal standard exists for what constitutes successful growth planning and management, we set out here our working understanding of the main components of effective, efficient and fair growth management planning for sustainability. These are the criteria we have used to evaluate the CRD's Regional Growth Strategy work and other related initiatives.

Effectiveness

- *Sustainable*: Achieving sustainability is as much a process as an objective. Principles of ecological, social and economic sustainability should be incorporated as an integral and on-going part of the long-term planning process. At the same time, it is essential that a process be measured by its actual success in moving towards greater sustainability. While there is some debate over what should be included under the definition of sustainability, key characteristics include the protection and rehabilitation of natural systems, equitable distribution of costs and benefits both intergenerationally and intragenerationally, community well-being and opportunity for self-determination, the satisfaction of basic human needs, and economic prosperity and diversity (Maclaren, 1996; Gibson 2002).
- *Ecosystem-Based*: Planning for long-term sustainability requires a comprehensive and holistic understanding of the ways in which ecosystems function, including how they respond to human interventions. Characteristic of an ecosystem-based approach is recognition that "everything is connected to everything else" and therefore it is important to seek broad understanding of the relationship among social, economic and ecological components (Margerum and Born, 1995). However, while it is important to adopt a

comprehensive view of the system, it is also necessary to focus realistically on key issues in order to achieve planning goals. Characteristics of an ecosystem-based approach include an emphasis on ecological boundaries over administrative ones, protection of ecological integrity, use of an adaptive approach that respects uncertainty and change within ecological and social systems, and awareness that the activities of humans should be seen as part of nature rather than separate from it (Mitchell, 1997; Roseland, 1997).

- *Visionary*: Planning for long-term sustainability requires that various levels of government, planning boards, stakeholders and public interests establish common goals based on the future social, economic and ecological health of a particular community or region (Nelson and Duncan, 1995). The process of creating a vision provides a new perspective of the future in which people are able to identify solutions and seek ways of overcoming traditional barriers to change. In this regard, a vision must be both desirable and feasible so that the community or region as a whole views it not only as positive, but also as realistic and therefore achievable. In order to be well-supported, a vision must be created in a participatory manner in which the people most concerned and affected are able to voice their concerns and desires for the future state of their community. At the same time a vision must be open to alteration as new concerns, understandings and opportunities emerge.

- *Integrative*: Planning for long-term sustainability should integrate the pursuit of new economic opportunities and greater social well being with efforts to reduce stresses on ecosystems. While some kinds of growth are desirable, even necessary, such growth must contribute to an overall enhancement of social and ecological conditions (e.g. through reductions in resource demands and waste assimilation capacities, more equitable distribution of benefits, replacement of more damaging activities, and rehabilitation of damaged systems).

- *Measurable*: Effective growth planning requires clear and measurable indicators for evaluating the process and outcome of specific management plans. The process of achieving long-term sustainability should include regular re-evaluation of plan objectives and efforts to reach them, so that suitable adjustments can be made.

- *Implementable*: Finally, a plan for long-term sustainability must be feasible enough to allow effective implementation. This means ensuring that the necessary financial resources, technological capacity, citizen approval and political support are in place. In addition, the people involved in the planning process must also have the commitment and enthusiasm necessary to face the challenges involved (Mitchell, 1997).

Efficiency

- *Time and Cost Effective*: Efficient planning is both time and cost effective. Excessive costs should be minimized, and while needed time must be taken in the decision making and implementation stage, objectives should be achieved in a reasonable time frame.

- *Comprehensive of all Costs*: Planning should adopt full cost accounting, recognizing the range of present, future and indirect costs associated with social, economic and ecological aspects of growth. Accordingly, planning proposals should clearly state the costs and benefits associated with the relevant options as well as any opportunities for mitigation of costs and enhancement of benefits (FRMB, 1995).
- *Co-ordinated*: Ecological, social and economic issues related to growth do not obey jurisdictional boundaries or regulations. There is consequently a need for a co-ordinated inter-agency approach that involves all levels of government administration, plus relevant planning boards and stakeholder interests, to deal with complex growth issues (Curran 1999a). Enhanced levels of co-ordination have the potential to bridge gaps and avoid unnecessary duplication, thereby increasing overall efficiency (FRMB, 1995).
- *Supported*: Participation by people directly affected by a planning decision can foster a valuable sense of local "ownership" of the process and its product. The principal benefits of this approach are that approved decisions gain support from a broader community of people, are more likely implemented efficiently, and often have a longer productive life (Canadian Round Tables, 1993). Participative decision making can also help to reduce conflict between groups and foster partnerships to achieve common goals (FRMB, 1995).

Fairness

- *Equitable*: Planning for urban sustainability should reflect both an intergenerational and intragenerational perspective (Maclaren, 1996; Mitchell, 1997). Intragenerational equity requires the fair distribution of social, economic and ecological costs and benefits between the community, municipality and larger region. Intergenerational equity ensures that the rights and needs of future generations are taken into account in present day planning. This concept reflects an awareness that our actions today can have long-term cumulative impacts, and that future generations have no less right to an ecologically healthy and socially sustainable planet than we do.
- *Participatory*: Effective community involvement at all stages of planning and management is essential for successful implementation. In proper planning for growth, local people must have a meaningful and active role in decision making that affects the future sustainability of their communities. A collaborative approach to planning works to include local perspectives, enhance communication techniques, facilitate problem-solving, and increase local understanding and education of important ecological issues (Glavovic, 1996). As a result, participatory decision making has the potential to meet the needs of a community, while at the same time reconciling and integrating a wide range of affected interests.
- *Representative*: In addition to respecting the interests of future generations and others that cannot be represented directly (e.g. children, other species, ecosystems), proper planning processes must provide for fair representation of available parties. This entails

recognition not only of contrasting values and interests but also different levels of political clout, financial and staff support, available time, participative skill and confidence (Mitchell, 1997; Selman, 1998). One of the challenges, therefore, is to determine representation that accurately reflects the mixture of local and more distant interests who are likely to be affected by a particular planning decision.

- *Open and Transparent:* A fair and effective planning process should also incorporate the ideals of openness and transparency within its overall structure (Mitchell, 1997).
- *Empowering:* Planning for long-term sustainability can help participating individuals and communities foster a better understanding of mutual concerns and a deeper commitment to social and ecological stewardship. No less importantly, it can help them become more skilled, self-confident and active participants in future community work. This both empowers individuals and enriches communities. However, it depends heavily on participants seeing that their involvement is effective and that the decision making process and products actually do bring real benefits.

CONTEXT: THE CAPITAL REGIONAL DISTRICT

The southeastern region of Vancouver Island was described by one prominent text as a "major climatic and floristic anomaly" (Pojar and MacKinnon, 1994: 13). Although it is surrounded by temperate rainforest, it is characterized by a rainshadow belt of dry, open forest habitat for Douglas-fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*), Garry Oak (*Quercus garryana*), Arbutus (*Arbutus menziesii*) and meadows of wildflowers. The uniqueness of this geography led Victoria's founder, Sir James Douglas, to exclaim in 1842 that the region "appears a perfect Eden in the midst of the dreary wilderness of the Northwest Coast."

This "perfect Eden" has long been attractive as human habitat. Not surprisingly then, southeast Vancouver Island – and the larger Canada-US ecological zone of which it is part (including also the Gulf and San Juan Islands in the Strait of Georgia, parts of the Olympic Peninsula and the Willamette Valley) – has been recognized as one of the most threatened as well as one of the most diverse regions in the province for both individual plant species and whole ecosystems (Pojar and Mackinnon, 1994). The ecological wealth and the mildness of the climate sustained early aboriginal populations along the coast, welcomed later European settlers, and have since attracted increasingly greater numbers of residents.

As a place to live, the Capital Region has much to offer. Located in one of the most beautiful natural settings on the west coast, the CRD boasts abundant recreational opportunities, along with slightly lower housing costs and a slower pace of life than other large urban centres such as Vancouver or Seattle. The City of Victoria itself attracts thousands of visitors each year to explore the charm and cultural history of downtown streets and turn of the century architecture. Residents themselves value an urban region that is easy to get around in, offers a wide array of restaurants, shops and cultural events, and yet is small enough to ensure residents often bump into someone they know downtown. These high quality of life values have led to almost a 50 percent population increase due to in-migration of new residents over the last 25 years.

In the coming years, the CRD's population is expected to increase by 28 percent – from about 318,000 in 1996 to 410,000 people by the year 2026² (CRD, June 2000). Increasing numbers of people in older age groups, aging members of the post-WWII baby boom generation, will add an additional planning dimension to the CRD. In the larger context, growth in the CRD is representative of population increases facing other parts of the province and the wider region of the Pacific Northwest (CRD, October 1996). The challenges will be "to determine what type of growth is needed to meet human needs, how to sustain such growth, and how to ensure that growth does not unacceptably degrade the environment which provides part of the base for growth" (Mitchell, 1997: 32-33).

² This number excludes Salt Spring and the Southern Gulf Islands which fall under the planning jurisdiction of the Islands Trust. While the projected future *rate* of increase has nearly halved from the previous 25 years to a moderate one percent annually, the CRD must still deal with the legacy of rapid growth and sprawl, an ever-diminishing land base and an aging population.

The political context in which these challenges are to be met is itself complex. The CRD is essentially a creature of the 13 municipal governments (and three electoral areas) that constitute the district (see Figure 1, above). The CRD's main decision making body is its Board of Directors, which is comprised of representatives appointed by the municipal councils, plus elected representatives of the three unincorporated areas.³ While the municipalities share many regional concerns and interests, they also differ in ways that lead to divergent positions on key growth management issues including densification, public transit, economic expansion, urban containment and affordable housing.

Certainly growth management was and is unlikely to be easy in the CRD. But the region enjoys a high level of public, private and government commitment to maintaining and enhancing much valued quality of life features – social, ecological and economic. These give the CRD a strong base for innovative thinking and action to promote greater sustainability while it attempts to accommodate new residents.

³ See <http://www.crd.bc.ca/board/index.htm>.

CRD REGIONAL GROWTH STRATEGY

Background

In 1995, the CRD Board committed itself to developing a Regional Growth Strategy⁴ (CRD, July 1997). The strategy was to be an organizing framework to co-ordinate the objectives of the Board, municipalities, and local residents, and to provide future direction for responses to growth pressures facing the region over the next 25-30 years. The CRD stated that the strategy would represent "an agreement on future goals and priorities at a regional scale, and [commit] the regional district and affected municipalities to a course of action to meet common social, economic and environmental objectives" (CRD, July 1997: 1).

The growth strategy work is guided by the CRD Board and the Board retains the highest level of decision making responsibility; however, a number of other committees advise the Board on important matters (see Figure 2, below):

- The Regional Planning Committee (RPC) is the sub-committee of the CRD Board that guides the Regional Growth Strategy process, bringing forward recommendations to the Board as a whole.
- The Inter-Municipal Planning Advisory Committee (IMPAC) and the Advisory Regional Transportation Planning Committee (ARTPC)⁵ provide technical advice on regional and inter-municipal issues, and on the direction of the growth strategy process.
- The Inter-Governmental Advisory Committee (IAC) – comprised of senior policy representatives, municipal staff, provincial government employees, and staff from other agencies – provides a forum for discussion and joint decision making concerning the implementation of growth strategy objectives.

The overall organizational structure of the CRD as of April 2000 and the reporting lines for its committees and other decision making participants, are set out in Figure 2.

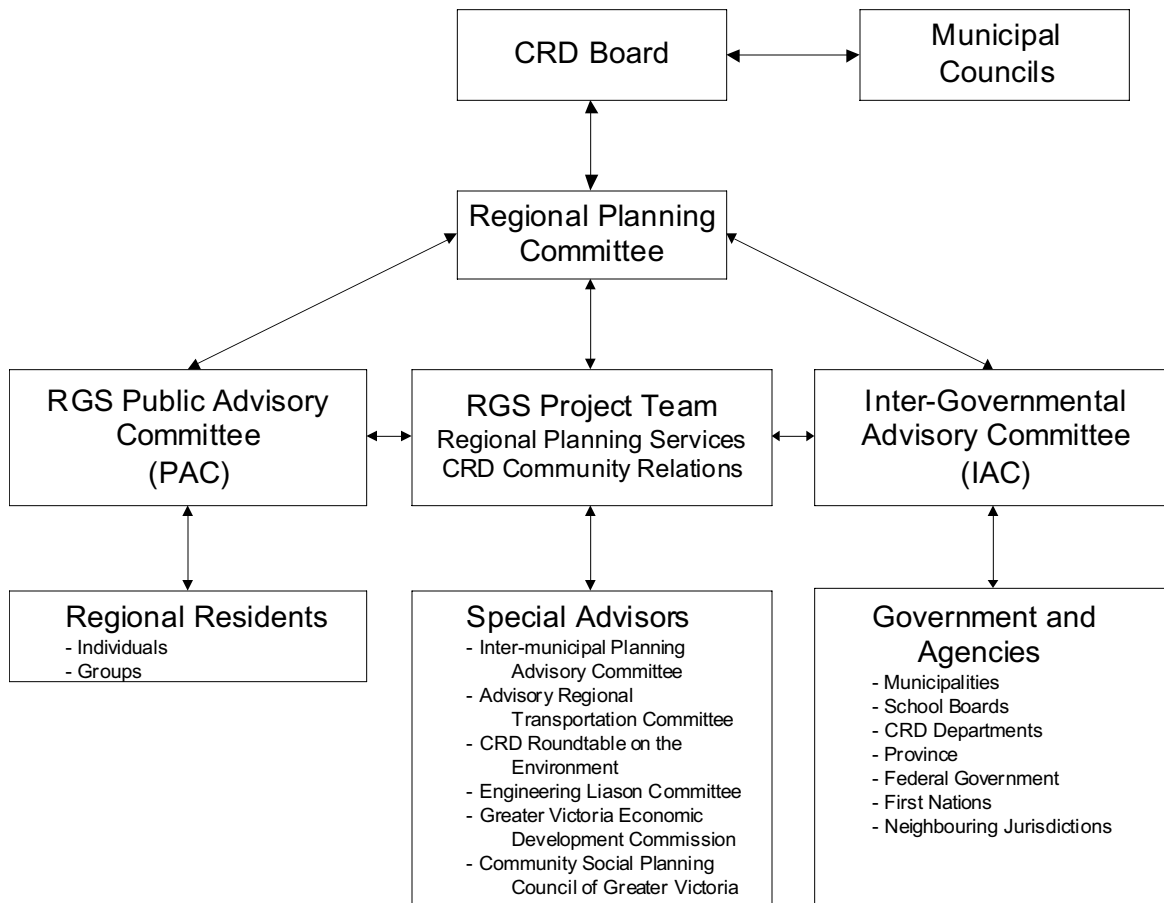
The Regional Growth Strategy process also requires public consultation. The CRD developed a public consultation plan, which it revised as the process evolved, and as it learned from the experience of public consultation in a variety of forms throughout the deliberations on growth strategy options. Until 2001, the CRD's public consultation efforts were complemented and partly guided by a Public Advisory Committee (PAC), most of whose members were appointed from the public. One CRD Board member sat on the committee as a link to the Regional Planning Committee and CRD Board. The Region

⁴ See the CRD Regional Growth Strategy website (www.crd.bc.ca/regplan/RGS/) for further information and for downloadable versions of many of the documents referenced in this report.

⁵ These two committees were merged in 2001 under IMPAC, which includes planning and engineering directors from the member municipalities.

must hold a public hearing once the regional strategy has been approved by all member municipalities.⁶

Figure 2: The CRD Organizational Structure for Regional Growth Strategy Work



Source: CRD, April 2000:4 <crd.bc.ca/regplan/RGS/Backgrnd/g_apr00.pdf>

CRD Regional Growth Strategy Process to Date

The CRD Board formally initiated its growth strategy work in January 1996. Its first steps were to commission analyses of existing policies, current trends and growth implications. Among the important results was a composite regional vision from the individual municipalities' expected futures as implied by the contents of their official community plans (CRD, October 1996). CRD staff had initially advocated a regional visioning process, but the new Board established after elections in late 1996 decided that

⁶ The legislation requires a public hearing after the Board has given the growth strategy by-law first and second reading, but prior to statutory referral and third reading.

the official community plans, representing current municipal visions, should set the stage. The resulting Official Community Plan Option was intended to show where change was needed to deal more effectively with growth challenges facing the region.

While constructing the Official Community Plan Option unearthed some consensus on goals and values for the future of the CRD, it also pointed to needs for closer attention to six key priority areas: housing, transportation, economic development, managing and balancing growth, environment and resources, and social well-being. Perhaps most significantly, the Official Community Plan Option revealed clearly the overall built-out effect of continued growth following plans now in place. Members of the public who followed the process were appalled. Opinions polled through surveys and open houses indicated the majority desired a rate of growth that was slower or much slower than the rate implied by forecasts for population relocation and associated sprawl⁷ in the CRD over the next 25 years (CRD, November 1997; Mitchell, 1999).

For the CRD Board, the Official Community Plan Option remained the appropriate starting point as the implicit collective vision as established in the local plans. CRD staff initiated a growth implications study to examine more carefully the likely impacts of current trends on conditions in the CRD. Their "baseline scenario" focusing on results by the year 2021⁸ was then used to identify the most pressing needs for redirection towards more effective growth management (CRD, March 1997).

In November 1997, the Board held a Regional Summit of all elected officials in the CRD to select the key priority areas on which the Regional Growth Strategy would focus. The resulting Board-approved report, *Framework for Our Future* (September 1998, updated December 1999) set out the priority areas, raised issues about identifying alternatives to the current path, and suggested mechanisms for working towards achieving the long range regional vision.

This vision, described as a composite derived from the regional municipalities' official community plans and the *Regional Green/Blue Spaces Strategy*,⁹ was presented as a future

where modest growth and economic diversification occur while we continue to maintain and enhance our natural environment, our agricultural landscapes, our arts and culture and our established neighbourhoods and communities. The core municipalities experience infill and modest population increases, with the bulk of new residential growth occurring in the Western Community municipalities of Colwood and Langford, some in a limited number of new neighbourhoods. The Saanich Peninsula retains its rural and small town character as does Sooke, Metchosin and the Highlands. While the Metropolitan Core remains the dominant cultural and business hub of the region, economic expansion occurs in employment centres in Colwood and Langford. Limited employment expansion occurs in the

⁷ In the CRD, as elsewhere, sprawl is a broad term, not easily reducible to a precise definition. Generally, it is used to refer to dispersed, low-density development, spreading away from established centres of population and commerce, reliant on private vehicles and difficult to service efficiently.

⁸ The forecast date was later changed to 2026 to maintain a 25 year planning period from the anticipated time of approval of the RGS in 2001.

⁹ The previously agreed upon *Regional Green/Blue Spaces Strategy* is a plan to create a network of protected areas and trails. It served as a foundation document on "green infrastructure" for the Growth Strategy process. The *Strategy* is discussed in greater detail later in this report.

vicinity of Victoria International Airport. Transit, commuter cycling and walking are common alternatives to travel by private automobile. A regional green/blue spaces system protects and maintains the full range and diversity of the natural environment that surrounds us, including significant green spaces, the marine environment, wetlands, fish and wildlife habitat, unique ecosystems, and the remnant ecosystems that flourished here before the time of Captain Cook. Natural systems that have suffered damage have been restored where possible. By 2026, stable and durable physical limits contain ongoing change to urban communities and rural settlements in the Capital Region (CRD, December 1999: 5)

Key aspects of the regional vision are listed in Box 5, below. All member municipalities endorsed the report, except for three that had largely procedural concerns (CRD, December 1999: 31).

Box 5: Key Aspects of the Regional Vision

- **Growth occurs within physical limits.** The majority of any future population increase is accommodated in existing urban areas, primarily in Langford and Colwood, with some infill and redevelopment in the Core municipalities.
- **Community and sub-regional diversity is preserved and enhanced.** Small urban communities and the rural areas of the Peninsula and the Western Communities experience stable to limited population increases, and maintain a strong agricultural base.
- **Environmentally sensitive and natural resource lands are preserved and protected.** This includes the Forest Land Reserve (FLR), the Agricultural Land Reserve (AGL), and regionally significant green and blue space areas.
- **Three employment centres exist.** The Metropolitan Core is complemented in the west by a major employment concentration in the Langford and Colwood town centres, and on the Peninsula by an employment centre in the vicinity of Victoria International Airport.
- **Regional governance means local governments working together,** co-operating, collaborating, and co-ordinating as necessary, to address matters of common concern.

Source: CRD, September 1998

In addition to key vision components, the *Framework for Our Future* report included a variety of other lists, reflecting various attempts to cover and consolidate the full range of important, and sometimes competing, growth management considerations. The apparent aim was to identify a basis for analysis that might usefully simplify a dauntingly complex process. The report recognized the 14 goals set out by the province in the *Growth Strategies Act* (see Box 4, above) and added

- four core principles:
 - sustainability (maintaining natural system functions and not compromising opportunities for future generations),
 - appropriateness (respecting CRD local conditions and aspirations),
 - continuity (building on work already done), and

- cooperation/collaboration/coordination (among CRD, member municipalities, the province and neighbouring governments);
- six priority areas (managing and balancing growth, transportation, economic development, environment and resources, housing, and social well-being); and
- six value categories (personal safety and security, efficient and effective local and regional government, high quality natural and built environment, rural character and agriculture, community stability, and community and regional character and diversity).

It also included an attempt to combine all these considerations into a set of evaluation criteria. Eighteen criteria were presented in five categories, each of which was given a Board weighting:

- liveable human settlement (Board weighting 19.7%),
- economic vitality (Board weighting 20.1%),
- enhanced quality of life (Board weighting 14.8%),
- environment and resource stewardship (Board weighting 28.8%), and
- practical and affordable implementation (Board weighting 16.6%).

The criteria (reproduced in Appendix B, below) were to be used in assessing growth management options, deciding on final CRD strategy details, and monitoring strategy implementation. However, the list suffered from conceptual difficulties (competing objectives were included in single criteria) and received only approval in principle from the CRD Board. Subsequent comments from member municipalities revealed no consensus and the criteria were included only as an appendix to the *Framework for Our Future* report (updated December 1999: 30, B1-4). When the four main approaches to growth management were subjected to technical assessment, the criteria were used only as a "point of departure" in the development of 53 more specific indicators for the analysis (CitySpaces *et al*, July 2000: 3).

Throughout the process leading to and following CRD Board agreement on the *Framework for Our Future* document, interested members of the public, and two committed members of the Public Advisory Committee continued to impress upon the CRD Board that the Regional Growth Strategy should not simply respond to "inevitable" growth, but should begin with a vision of the desired future of the region and set out how growth would be managed accordingly. Several CRD Board members continued to focus on the need to create broad principles within which each local government could continue to realize its own community's vision. At the base of their position was fear that a Regional Growth Strategy would compromise their local land use planning authority. Local governments generally did not want other local governments in the region telling them how to conduct their business.

In April 1998, the CRD Board held a two day Capital Ideas public forum to canvas public views on what should be contained in the draft growth strategy framework agreement. Over 33 different individuals and groups presented visions for practical responses to growth pressures in the region (CRD, May 1998). Only seven of 22 CRD Board members listened to the public ideas at some point during the forum.

To address the priority areas outlined in *Foundations for Our Future* documents and the public consultation, four Growth Strategy Alternatives were developed through a series of workshops and consultations with the public, local politicians and municipal staff. The first draft of the four alternatives, a document entitled *Growth Strategy*

Alternatives for the Capital Region (CRD, December 1998), was criticized by both the CRD Board and the public. Board members did not think the draft paid sufficient attention to official community plans. The few members of the public and PAC members who closely followed the growth strategy process objected to the explicitly pro-growth bias of the report. They noted, for example, the report dedicated several pages to justifying why growth management planning measures are unsuccessful (Curran 1999c; Mitchell 1999). After considerable revision by CRD staff, a new version was released in April 1999 for comment from member councils, First Nations, advisory committees and the public. A final version of *Growth Strategy Alternatives for the Capital Region*, published in October 1999, was approved for technical analysis and further public scrutiny.

The document set out four proposed alternatives. The first was the Base Strategy – essentially the compilation of anticipated results presuming continued growth guided by current municipal plans, but with an "urban containment boundary." The three other scenarios began with the Base Strategy but added more sustainable components: Metropolitan Core and Major Centres (densifying the Victoria core), Transit-Linked Towns (densification along a rapid transit corridor), and Hierarchy of Walkable Centres (densification around village centres in the region).

Each of the four proposed alternatives incorporated six "strategic elements": urban containment and rural protection, green/blue space protection, more complete communities, balanced regional transportation, stronger regional economy, and improved housing affordability. All options were also to consider inter-jurisdictional growth management, co-ordinated infrastructure and servicing, and progress monitoring to ensure successful implementation of the strategic elements. Adoption of any of the three alternatives to the Base Strategy option would move the region significantly towards sustainability.

A multi-disciplinary team of consultants completed a report, *Technical Analysis and Assessment: Regional Growth Strategy Options for the Capital Region*, in July 2000 (CitySpaces, et al., July 2000). The options were evaluated according to the CRD Board's priority areas and criteria (mentioned above and listed in Appendix B, below), and indicators based on these criteria, using computer modelling and interviews. None of the alternatives emerged as a clearly preferred option. The report concluded, however, that given modest growth a modification of the Metropolitan Core and Major Centres option would be best. If growth occurred more quickly, Transit-Linked Towns would be the better long-term option.

Public response to the four alternatives was solicited through a campaign including an information package in newspapers and on the internet, public displays and open houses. During June 2000 a random survey and a non-random survey were conducted (receiving 501 and 983 responses respectively). The results reflected the strong public commitment to regional growth management and, in addition, endorsed the proposal that the CRD should act in co-operation with the municipalities to create strategies for regional transportation, economic development and affordable housing. The six strategic elements identified above were also clearly supported.

Overall, the Hierarchy of Walkable Centres option was most preferred by survey respondents, although there were some differences by subregion. Those living in the Western communities and the Saanich Peninsula, for example, preferred the Transit-

Linked Towns alternative. In early September, a two day public forum provided an opportunity for individuals and groups to present written or oral viewpoints regarding the growth strategy options to the CRD Board. In most cases, those who chose to step forward advocated more radical approaches to growth management and sustainability and emphasized protection of the environment.

One week later (September 15 and 16, 2000) Capital Summit 2, the Second Regional Summit of Elected Officials, was held. The objectives of the summit were to “review and prioritise the six strategic elements that form the basis of the growth strategy options, review and discuss the pros and cons of the four regional growth strategy options, and choose a preferred option from the four strategies or suggest a new option/hybrid.”¹⁰ Consistent with the technical analysis recommendations (and notably inconsistent with public opinion), the Summit provided clear direction to begin drafting a Regional Growth Strategy based on Option 2: Metropolitan Core and Major Centres with a variety of suggested modifications, and incorporating some components of the Transit-Linked Towns option (see Appendix C for performance guidelines for the proposed option). Summit participants also strongly supported an integrated regional approach to implementing all of the strategic elements, and approved the development of strategic initiatives in the areas of regional transportation, economic development and affordable housing. These projects were outlined in October 2000, formally launched in March 2001 and are expected to be completed, with draft strategies presented to the CRD Board by June 2003.

A *Proposed Regional Growth Strategy for BC's Capital Region (Draft)* (CRD, March 2001) was approved for publication in February 2001 and distributed to member municipalities, stakeholders, First Nations, and the public for review. Comments were due by July. At the end of September, CRD staff submitted a report to the Regional Planning Committee summarizing all comments received, along with staff responses and recommendations for adjustments to the Strategy. The revised Regional Growth Strategy, introduced as *By-law 2952*, received first and second reading on February 27, 2002. A final hearing on April 3 allowed members of the public to make oral and written presentations. With few exceptions, the public participants endorsed the by-law and/or called for a more radical approach to growth management. The by-law then entered a statutory 120 review period that was to end August 5, 2002.

While CRD staff had hoped to win agreement from the participating municipalities so that the by-law could be approved by the end of summer, they anticipated some municipal resistance. A provincial facilitator was appointed to meet with municipal leaders, explain the legislative requirements and help address municipal concerns. At this stage in the growth management strategy development process, the content of the strategy is still open to amendment, but municipalities can only identify particular clauses that they find unacceptable and set out the reasons for each objection. Under the provincial law, a Regional Growth Strategy cannot be adopted without unanimous acceptance by member municipalities. If any municipality rejects the proposed by-law, and objections cannot be satisfied in a new consensus, the case must be referred to the province for mediation or arbitration.

¹⁰ www.crd.bc.ca/regplan/RGS/Choices/summit3.htm

To deal with various municipal concerns, the statutory review period in the CRD case was extended twice to September 30 and October 31, 2002. Some municipalities were concerned about particular growth management provisions (e.g. regarding housing targets, cross-boundary land use conflicts, and employment centre status) but the most common discomforts were about potential implementation costs that might offend municipal interests and have negative implications for municipal autonomy. The CRD attempted to clarify matters by preparing a draft implementation plan (CRD, October 2002). Through adjustments, compromises and some deferrals of contentious decisions, most disagreements were eventually resolved or mitigated sufficiently for approval. By the end of the extended review period, all but two municipalities accepted the by-law.

Box 6: Regional Growth Strategy Process Chronology

1996	Phase I:	Start project and begin background research Initiate public consultation
1997	Phase II:	Develop and assess Official Community Plan option Capital Ideas discussion groups Public Survey Regional Summit One: elected officials identify priorities
1998-99	Phase III:	Develop and adopt <i>Framework for Our Future</i> Regional forum Develop four growth strategy options Public workshops Technical evaluation of options Public survey on options
2000		Regional Summit Two: elected officials select hybrid option Open houses and Regional forum
2001	Phase IV:	Prepare and review draft Regional Growth Strategy
2002		Revise and put forward Strategy as <i>By-law 2952</i> Public hearing Formal municipal referral period (extended twice) Development of draft implementation strategy Referral of continuing disagreement of two municipalities to provincial minister for mediation or arbitration
2003ff (anticipated)	Phase V:	Final resolution of disagreements Adoption of Regional Growth Strategy Implement and monitor Regional Growth Strategy

Source: adapted from <crd.bc.ca/regplan/RGS/Backgrnd/timeline.htm>

The dissenting municipalities – the Town of Sidney and the District of North Saanich – expressed concerns about certain policy specifics and about the anticipated costs of strategy implementation (CRD, 2003). In the case of North Saanich the dissent reflected a long established unfriendliness to the growth strategy initiative. Following the legislated procedure, the matter has now been referred to the provincial Minister of Community, Aboriginal and Women's Services, who will initiate a dispute resolution process involving mediation or arbitration.

In the meantime, the CRD has continued work on implementation strategies. So far, working papers have been prepared and early consultations undertaken on implementation strategies for housing affordability and regional transportation (CRD, February 2003a, 2003b). A regional economic development strategy is also being prepared under the leadership of the Greater Victoria Enterprise Partnership Society, a co-operative venture with representatives from a range of regional economic interests; CRD staff participate as advisors only (CRD January 2003).

Once the dispute resolution is completed and the Regional Growth Strategy has been accepted by all municipalities, the Strategy will be officially adopted by the CRD Board. The municipal councils will then have two years to prepare Regional Context Statements that describe how their community plans will become consistent with the Regional Growth Strategy over time. The CRD will then also enter into Implementation Agreements with other organizations (e.g., neighbouring regional governments, BC Transit, provincial agencies) on matters of funding and co-ordination of activities that require co-operation with bodies outside the CRD. The CRD will monitor implementation of the Regional Growth Strategy and prepare annual reports on progress. Periodic reviews are required by legislation (CRD, April 2001).

The chronology of Regional Growth Strategy deliberations so far is summarized above in Box 6.

Sustainability and Well-being in the CRD Regional Growth Strategy

In the *Local Municipalities Act* (Part 25), the purpose of a Regional Growth Strategy is “...to promote human settlement that is socially, economically, and environmentally healthy and that makes efficient use of public facilities and services, land and other resources.” This is not an explicit call for pursuit of sustainability, but serious consideration of the 14 objectives set out in the provincial guidelines (see Box 4) could move a region considerably closer to this goal. The CRD refers to sustainability on a number of occasions in the Regional Growth Strategy by-law as a natural progression from the *Framework for Our Future* and *Regional Green/Blue Spaces* processes.

The proposed Regional Growth Strategy by-law provides a general working definition of regional sustainability: “...actions taken to meet needs today do not compromise the ability of future generations to meet their needs, ensure the ongoing health of the natural processes that sustain life, and support the social and economic arrangements that create prosperity and well-being.” Other references to sustainability in the Regional Growth Strategy are set out in Box 7. While there is room for quibbling about the specifics, the proposed by-law has a clear mandate to move the CRD toward

sustainability. The difficulty will be in threading this theoretical intent through implementable actions to the ground level.

Box 7: Sustainability references in Regional Growth Strategy *By-law 2952*

<p>Sustainable management of resources and the environment</p>	<p>...means following four basic principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waste discharges of all types should not exceed the assimilative capacity of the natural environment (including air, land and water); • Depletion rates for natural resources should not exceed the regenerative capacity of the ecosystems that produce them; • Consumption of scarce renewable and non-renewable resources should be minimized through conservation, efficiency and application of reduce, reuse, recycle practices; and, • Decision-making should give first priority to options that maintain ecosystem health and support the ongoing ability of natural systems to sustain life.
<p>Enhancement of social sustainability (and community health and well-being)</p>	<p>...through complete communities that are safe, socially diverse, openly accessible and livable (by better balance and distribution of jobs, housing and services, wider choice of housing types and convenient alternative transportation choices).</p>
<p>A sustainable transportation system</p>	<p>...that</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • allows the basic access needs of individuals and society to be met safely and in a manner consistent with human and ecosystem health, and with equity within and between generations; • is affordable, operates efficiently, offers choice of transport mode, and supports a vibrant economy; and, • limits emissions and waste, encourages efficient methods of energy consumption, re-uses and recycles its components, minimizes the use of land and reduces the generation of noise and other pollutants.

Regional economic sustainability	<p>...means</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the production and distribution of wealth to meet the needs of present and future generations for goods and services in ways that ensure the long-term promotion of a satisfying and high quality of life for all residents; • exhibits diverse and viable economic opportunities and is resilient and responsive to changing circumstances; • the involvement of a broad range of parties and interests in economic decision-making; and, • supports the achievement of environmental and social sustainability.
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Source: CRD, February 2002

In practice, the key sustainability issue in the CRD is that the majority of the region's residents now enjoy a high quality of life, and the growth strategy process is an attempt to ensure that this is maintained in the face of an increasing population. For some, the most obvious sustainability issues are ecological, or at least related to the natural environment as a source of resources, a place for recreation and a foundation for physical, social and economic life. Regional commitment to addressing threats to the biophysical environment was evident prior to initiation of the Regional Growth Strategy work, and is reflected in the development of the *Regional Green/Blue Spaces Strategy* (CRD, October 1997). But the ecological issues are not easily, and perhaps not usefully, separated from apparently economic and social factors. The growth strategy's focus on "growth within limits" (CRD, December 1999: 4) responded to sprawl as a social, economic and ecological problem.

Accordingly, the *Framework for Our Future* agreement between the CRD and its member municipalities identified six priorities (beyond the general objectives of collaborative sustainability and the 14 goals of the *Growth Strategies Act*), that integrated social, economic and ecological considerations:

- personal safety and security,
- efficient and effective local and regional government,
- high quality natural and built environment,
- rural character and agriculture,
- community stability, and
- community and regional character and diversity.

(CRD, December 1999: 28)

Insistence on an integrated approach was a common feature of CRD deliberations. Some Regional Growth Strategy documents, including the *Technical Analysis*, the 2000 public survey questionnaire and the March 2001 *Regional Growth Strategy Draft*¹¹

¹¹ The Proposed RGS document (March, 2001) included social well-being narrowly within discussions of housing (under the priority area title of "Housing and Social Well-Being") but this was criticized as minimizing the importance of social well-being and was removed before the strategy was put forward as a by-law.

adopted "social well-being" as the title for a relatively narrow category of concerns, chiefly the social benefits of housing choice, access to services and amenities, social infrastructure, and public safety. This limited view was criticized by participants who thought social well-being should more accurately be seen as the integration of all priority areas of the Regional Growth Strategy and overall quality of life. The point was made that perhaps social well-being should really be the region's overall focus, rather than solely growth management. One community organization went further, suggesting that the philosophical basis of the growth strategy should be the maintenance and enhancement of five critical factors: ecological integrity, biodiversity, sustainability, quality of life and special character of the Region (CRD, September 2000).

The draft by-law identifies eight key initiatives areas in five categories, most of which involve a mix of social, economic and ecological considerations:

1. Managing and Balancing Growth
 - keep urban settlement compact
 - protect the integrity of rural communities
2. Environment and Resources
 - protect regional green and blue space
 - manage natural resources and the environment sustainably
3. Housing and Community
 - build complete communities
 - improve housing affordability
4. Transportation
 - increase transportation choice
5. Economic Development
 - strengthen the regional economy

(CRD, February 2002)

In addition, the document anticipates cross-cutting implementation efforts. Well-being remains an overarching concept underlying the draft Strategy, and as noted above, "sustainability" language is used throughout. Whether in practice, greater sustainability and well-being will be delivered will depend on concrete actions not spelled out in the draft Regional Growth Strategy by-law document.

Further discussion of the Regional Growth Strategy's potential for moving the CRD towards sustainability and well-being can be found in the Analysis section of this report.

CRD Regional Growth Strategy Priority Topics

In accord with the obligations and encouragements in the provincial *Growth Strategies Act*, as well as guidance from its own studies, deliberations and consultations, the CRD Regional Growth Strategy focuses on the five categories and eight topics noted above. Attention to Transportation, Economic Development and Housing were required in the law. Managing and Balancing Growth and Environment and Resources considerations related to two additional areas listed in the law – regional district services, and parks and natural areas. The following discussion examines the treatment of issues in each of these areas in the growth strategy process by considering the context from which the Regional

Growth Strategy emerged, the content of *By-law 2952*, and the challenges facing successful implementation.

Managing and Balancing Growth

Context

The CRD recognizes that growth (especially in an area of limited land base) can threaten quality of life and long-term sustainability, and that social and economic as well as ecological considerations are involved. In 1993, as part of the *Values, Goals and Priorities Project*, CRD residents identified safety and security, governance, environment, and regional and community character as high priority growth-related issues (CRD, March 1993). Over 80 percent of the surveyed public agreed that a firm urban containment boundary is an appropriate mechanism to limit growth and restrict expansion of serviced areas, and also ensure that rural areas remain rural. Land use inside the boundary should be actively managed, with emphasis on protecting green/blue spaces.

A co-ordinated approach is clearly supported and public commentators have consistently stated that they do not want the municipalities to act independently where growth management is concerned. The majority was even in favour of slowing the region's growth to retain current quality of life. As well, most were willing to accept "a little" (and some, "a lot" of) increased density in their area, although this varied according to neighbourhood. Generally, the wealthier areas dominated by single-detached homes were less willing to accept more density.

Municipal comment on the *Proposed Regional Growth Strategy* (March, 2001) muddies this clear direction, however. In the spectrum of municipal opinions on growth management, many do not coincide with the regional vision. Some municipalities call for more stringent controls, and indeed have already implemented growth measures within their jurisdiction. Others welcome growth and argue that it directly improves quality of life through increased taxes and public spending. In addition, municipalities in the CRD historically have enjoyed planning autonomy and a few resist any objectives dictated from other governmental levels. This deepens the challenge of managing and balancing growth in the CRD.

By-law 2952 position on Managing and Balancing Growth

The proposed by-law's section on Managing and Balancing Growth is concerned primarily with keeping urban settlement compact and preserving the integrity of rural communities.

The aim is to distribute 90 percent of cumulative new dwelling units (to 2026) within a firmly defined Regional Urban Containment and Servicing area, and in particular to the Metropolitan Core (downtown Victoria) and eight major centres along connecting corridors. This arrangement allows efficient express bus service, and lays the foundation for future high-capacity transport (along dedicated right-of-ways). The Core and centres are walkable, complete communities with a mix of business, housing (of various types), services and open spaces. An amendment to the Regional Urban Containment and Servicing boundary, or the addition of a major centre, can only be implemented as the outcome of a comprehensive five-year review of the Regional Growth Strategy. There

shall be no extension of services or capacity outside the Regional Urban Containment and Servicing area (except to address pressing public health or environmental issues, agricultural requirements or fire suppression).

As a general goal, rural areas will remain rural in character with subdivisions and development remaining within limits set in municipal official community plans at the time of adoption of the Regional Growth Strategy. Land use varies according to policy area designation. Capital Green Lands (including major parks, ecological reserves and water lands) will be designated for long-term protection from urban pressures or incompatible uses. Forest and Agricultural Reserves and crown forests will be managed as renewable working landscapes. The ecological values of Unprotected Greenspace will be preserved through a variety of means, such as conservation covenants, development permits for protection of ecological values and acquisition to create parks. The federal lands surrounding Victoria Airport are governed by a unique agreement for use and development.

Challenges

The greatest challenge for the Regional Growth Strategy may be in ensuring that the Regional Urban Containment and Servicing boundary is not eroded as designated development land begins to run out. There will be compelling arguments (such as maintaining housing affordability and economic expansion) to extend services and communities outside the boundary. There will also be intense pressure on green space and other land uses inside the Regional Urban Containment and Servicing area to compensate for the predicted shortage of commercial, and especially industrial, lands.

Other problems could emerge given the flexibility each municipality has in determining land use within its own jurisdiction. While municipalities must conform to the regional plan, there are openings for municipal decisions that would undermine the regional intent. For example a municipality could permit a large development along one of its boundaries that would be incompatible with a more protective zoning of an ecologically significant area in the neighbouring municipality. Measures to ensure adequate buffer zones to protect sensitive areas from growth pressures are not stipulated in the growth strategy.¹² If land use incompatibility problems are to be avoided, the municipalities will have to make co-operative efforts beyond the requirements of the Regional Growth Strategy. For these purposes and others they will have to foster strong civic engagement by private landowners. Inter-municipal co-ordination will also be required for effective and efficient region-wide actions to preserve continuous greenspaces and trails and run transit services.

The growth strategy is focused primarily on distributing additional people and containing development. This limited approach to mitigating growth pressures in the CRD seems unlikely to be sufficient. No provisions are made for programs aimed directly

¹² The *Proposed Regional Growth Strategy* (March 2001) included explicit reference to buffering greenspace from non-compatible land uses. More aggressive protection targets (than for core greenspace) were associated with these buffer areas in recognition that they would be under more intense pressure from development. Debate arose regarding whether the buffers should be inside or outside the designated land use boundary, and there was disagreement on whether targets should be set at all. In the by-law all mention of buffers was removed and their incorporation into land use is considered voluntary.

at shifting values and reducing the consumptive behaviour of existing residents.¹³ Yet, the quality of life in the region is certainly influenced by the overall effects of day to day decisions by all residents, current and new, corporate and individual (SISCN, 1998). If these decisions increase pressures on recreational areas, demands for resources, discharges of wastes, alteration of lands, disruptions of communities, and related problems, the valued aspects of community life, environmental aesthetics and underlying ecological functions will be compromised even if population numbers are stable.

Finally, despite the urgings of some regional residents, no consideration has been given to managing demand, that is, to take steps to discourage migration to the region, or at least to refrain from initiatives that would attract more new migrants.¹⁴

Environment and Resources

Context

A primary attraction for people who live in and visit the CRD is the exceptional natural surroundings. Roughly 60 percent of the region is categorized as natural areas, agricultural and forest land and CRD Water Lands (the protected areas surrounding the regional fresh water supply), and about a quarter of the land base is classified as sensitive ecosystem (CRD, September 1998). Yet growth pressures have already taken their toll. In the core of the region, where settlers were initially attracted by the unique Garry oak savanna, perhaps one percent of that original ecosystem remains, and much of this is threatened by invasive exotic species and the development plans of private owners. The need for better protection – for ecological, aesthetic and economic reasons – is widely recognized.

Maintenance of ecologically sensitive areas, green space and resource lands in the Region is aided by the existence of well established and new parks, the provincial law that protects Agricultural Land Reserve areas, the new Regional Green/Blue Spaces Strategy, and the more recent Liquid Waste Management Planning initiative, which should lead to improved treatment of sewage and stormwater runoff.

The *Technical Analysis* preceding the growth strategy recognized that population growth would bring absolute increases in resource consumption and pollution. Unexpectedly, it also predicted a *per capita* increase in some areas, including water consumption, and synergistic negative effects from traffic congestion. These effects, combined, threatened to decrease quality of life from 1996 standards. However, the document focused on environment only from the limited perspective of resource use. In a similarly narrow manner, the public survey included no questions related to the environment, other than to confirm that farmland and undeveloped rural areas outside the Regional Urban Containment and Servicing area should be protected.

¹³ Some consumption management initiatives have been undertaken by the region outside the Regional Growth Strategy work. These include efforts centred on water conservation, solid waste diversion and encouragement of cycling.

¹⁴ A CRD public survey conducted in 2000 found 40 percent of the respondents preferred slower growth than predicted. Support for growth was greatest in the Western Communities. Subsequent CRD growth management documents did not address this; however, the main implications are perhaps for the economic development strategy work launched in October 2002.

Public participants at the 2000 forum attempted to expand the scope of attention to environmental issues so that the deliberations would incorporate the broader and integrated perspective of ecosystem sustainability and stewardship. They argued that waterways, natural and rural areas have high value to residents as the CRD's "green infrastructure," and called for a firm commitment to protect these areas and enforce protection rules. They also held that development should enhance human and ecosystem well-being simultaneously, and that environmental costs should be included in new development proposals. Some CRD municipalities agree with these perspectives. Others are reluctant to commit to any quantitative protection targets¹⁵ and resist any regional dictation of land use goals within their municipal boundaries.

By-law 2952 position on Environment and Resources

The Regional Growth Strategy by-law supports full implementation of the earlier Regional Green/Blue Spaces Strategy as the key means to protect regional landscape character, ecological heritage and biodiversity. The intent is to complete 100 percent of the Sea to Sea Green/Blue belt by 2011 and all of the Regional Trail system by 2016. So-called Unprotected Green Space Policy Areas are to be protected "as much as possible" from development. The ecological value of marine areas (identified as Blue Space Policy Areas) is recognized and the CRD proposes collaboration with the provincial and federal governments to prepare a coastal management plan and ensure their ecological integrity.

The by-law states that principles of sustainability (see Box 7) will be applied to the management and delivery of physical and environmental services, air quality improvement and resource needs assessment. A particular initiative is to undertake a review of long-term strategic resource needs (e.g. aggregates). In addition, strategic plans for water management, solid and liquid waste management will be reviewed and adjusted as required and new plans will be developed where they are lacking (such as a Liquid Waste Management Plan for the District of Sooke). Lastly, a program to monitor performance relative to targets for air quality, environmental contamination and energy efficiency will be designed and implemented.

Challenges

Environment and Resources concerns involve internal tensions between ecological and extractive objectives, both of which are vulnerable to the effects of urban growth. Important Resource Needs Assessment studies are incorporated within the growth strategy, but these future requirements will have to be fitted carefully into a larger picture including the maintenance of ecological values.

Initiatives to protect the environment face many long-term challenges. The integrity of the parks is threatened by their popularity and ecosystems will be increasingly stressed as the population grows. Commitment to Agricultural Land Reserve protection will decline if growth pressures raise the speculative value of agricultural lands or reduce the viability of agriculture by, for example, limiting the availability or increasing the cost

¹⁵ The Proposed Regional Growth Strategy (March 2001) contained targets (percentage protected according to timeline) for identified unprotected greenspace and buffers to development. During the by-law negotiation process some municipalities were reluctant to commit to specific numbers and the document was revised to state that "as much as possible" of ecologically valuable lands will be protected as they come up for development review.

of irrigation water. Some of the identified sensitive ecosystems and Green/Blue Spaces as yet enjoy little formal protection. The CRD itself notes inadequacies and problems concerning ground and surface water management, development limitations for hazard lands, reservation of aggregate sources, and protection of sensitive watersheds and ecosystem remnants (CRD, December 1999). Although the Regional Growth Strategy by-law attempts to address many of these issues, developing integrated approaches to overcome traditionally competing objectives and interests remains a challenge.

Successful responses to many of these problems demand better understanding and more widely shared appreciation of the cumulative impacts of growth on natural systems. Co-operative participation not just by all of the region's municipalities, but also by the federal and provincial governments and, in some cases, neighbouring regions (for example, with the Cowichan Valley Regional District to improve the condition of the Saanich Inlet) is also required. Perhaps most importantly, many environment and resource protection initiatives will affect private land owners and may fail without their active participation.

While CRD residents continue to place high value on environmental quality, public preferences also include low-density developments and unrestricted use of water, energy and other critical resources. The interconnection between ecological health and day to day lifestyles is not always made. A central challenge will be to combine high quality of life values with environmentally sensitive designs, and over time to shift values and actions to favour restoration and conservation.

Housing and Community

Context

In the Region's vision, the future includes "diverse housing forms and tenures to meet the needs of all people," including a gradual shift away from single detached units to increasingly populous and walkable downtowns and city centres and more affordable units (CRD, December 1999).

The *Technical Analysis* anticipated 52,000 new dwellings by 2026, with a greater choice of housing forms, including ground-oriented units to accommodate an aging population. The analysis assumes that a range of housing types will improve overall affordability, that the "best" settlement pattern would locate housing near jobs, services and amenities, and that changes will come gradually. The analysis concluded that the Region should be able to accommodate the anticipated population growth in existing areas through townhouses and attractive three storey condo/apartment buildings that are in keeping with anticipated demands and with maintenance of existing community character.

Still, there are unresolved concerns that housing in the region will become even more expensive. Seeking higher densities in existing communities is expected to entail higher prices for smaller units and mean less affordable housing for individuals and families with lower incomes (CRD, March 1997). Growth management advocates, however, say that emphasis on smaller, more diverse and densified types of units and tenures will ensure more affordable housing for a wider range of individuals and family types. Experience in the United States suggests that jurisdictions with the most stringent growth management regimes also have the best affordable housing initiatives and diversity of housing types.

Over 80 percent of the public believe that a Housing Affordability Strategy is necessary and that it should be developed from a region-wide perspective, rather than left to the judgement of individual municipalities (CRD, 2000). Comments from the 2000 public forum called for the integration of such a strategy with the Regional Growth Strategy, including measurable commitments regarding both the production and maintenance of affordable housing. Concrete suggestions on how to achieve this included a regional levy to support affordable housing, funding and tax structure changes by senior governments, partnering with non-profit community groups, and allowing secondary suites in existing homes.¹⁶

The large number of groups involved in housing and housing issues in the CRD demonstrates the high degree of the public's interest and concern. There is also strong support for the development of alternative housing forms (e.g. apartments, townhouses and suites), as well as smaller houses and lots. Nonetheless, there still exists demand for an increased percentage of single-family detached homes, and there is a minority that are unwilling to accept any further development in their area.

By-law 2952 position on Housing and Community

The Regional Growth Strategy by-law addresses housing issues on two fronts: locating housing in the context of more complete communities, and maintaining housing affordability. Complete communities integrate a wider range of activities closer to home in a balanced and distributed manner. This is accomplished by offering a variety of housing types and tenures proximate to places of work, schools, shopping, recreation and parks. New developments contribute to complete communities when they are: inside or within a ten minute walk (500 metres) of the Metropolitan Core or a Major Centre, within a ten minute walk of employment, services, stores, recreation, schools or parks, and within a seven minute walk (400 m) of a public transit route. They should also avoid or mitigate seismic or flooding hazards.

The CRD understands the inherent tension between housing affordability and a limited land base available for development. ("Affordable" housing consumes no more than 30 percent of gross income.) Within two years of adoption of the Regional Growth Strategy, a Regional Housing Affordability Strategy is to be put in place in partnership with business and community interests, the municipalities and the provincial and federal governments. It is to address affordability issues resulting from limited land, and to focus on the requirements of low and moderate income households, the elderly, youth, those with special needs and the homeless. A discussion paper on this topic explores the appropriate role and degree of involvement of the CRD (CRD, January 2001b). It also considers use of tools such as land use and zoning regulations, approval processes and funding, use of local government-owned land, community planning, partnerships, strategies to combat NIMBY (not in my backyard) behaviour, inventories and monitoring.

Challenges

The most obvious challenge is to maintain housing affordability in the context of a finite land base for potential development. Further complexities result from needs to meet land

¹⁶ While almost all new single detached houses are now pre-wired and plumbed to allow later installation of secondary suites, such suites are still illegal in some CRD municipalities.

demands for commercial and industrial purposes. Working through these conflicts involves integrating housing affordability and economic strategies while keeping the regional vision to the forefront. This could prove more difficult where municipal co-operation is required, given how jealously some municipalities guard their autonomy, especially over implementation of densification strategies in their own jurisdiction.

Actions must be taken to win support for increasing density and diversification of housing types. Developers tend to follow rather than to lead demand. Therefore, land use policies and regulations must encourage higher density patterns and forms of housing. As well, development patterns must engender a sense of equitable distribution of costs and benefits between municipalities.

Public attitudes may have to shift further to ensure that there is sufficient demand for alternatives. Demand for single-family homes in all areas still remains high. Moreover, in core and existing neighbourhoods, in-fill must often overcome the fears of local residents who resist higher density levels in the name of preserving neighbourhood character and established "quality of life" characteristics. An associated hurdle is the perception that densification leads to greater social and economic ills. Creative designs that enhance important community characteristics will be important in allaying these fears.

Residents living in the outer and rural communities must be given grounds for confidence that greenspace and agricultural land on the periphery will be preserved, and that their neighbourhoods will gain better public transit and not face an increase in car traffic. And residents now dispersed outside existing communities need to be dissuaded from adding to the sprawling effects of lot severances. While severing a lot from an existing property may seem like an agreeable means of income enhancement or retirement support, the collective results degrade rural life while increasing public costs.

Transportation

Context

Public concerns about transportation are greater than those surrounding any other growth management issue. Assessments by the CRD in 1997 anticipated that both private automobile and public transportation requirements will increase significantly as the population expands. While the heaviest areas of travel will remain in the core municipalities, the Western Communities, the Saanich Peninsula, and the Island Highway area are likely to experience the highest rates of traffic volume increase.

Many current residents fear that greater congestion will lead to further negative effects, such as increased travel time, more public calls for widening and improving existing roadways, higher taxes to pay for infrastructure improvements, losses of natural areas due to road construction and expansion, declines in air quality, additional noise pollution, reduced travel safety, and rising vehicle operation expenses. Well over 90 percent of surveyed residents agreed that a co-ordinated regional plan for transportation should be implemented to avoid these decreases in quality of life factors.

The survey results also indicated that demand management and shifts to transit and other forms of transportation are desirable. Despite these pronouncements, automobiles remain the preferred method of travel. Single occupants in private vehicles now account for nearly 60 percent of all trips by CRD residents and when car trips with two or more

occupants are added, automobiles represent about 78 percent of the total, compared to under eight percent for transit and under 15 percent for walking and cycling (CRD, June 2002: 6).

A small but vocal contingent of cyclists in the area has been pushing for initiatives to improve cycling access and safety throughout the region. These goals are positively received since they are consistent with the intent of the Regional Growth Strategy, though some of the initial targets, especially regarding the percentage of population who may choose to commute to work, could prove unrealistic.

The Victoria Regional Transit System now serves significant rural areas of the CRD in addition to the urban core. But it falls short of a comprehensively co-ordinated transit system, including express bus service to and from the outlying communities. While this is something the CRD municipalities generally desire, it is not clear how such a system would be delivered. Creation of a regional transportation authority was once suggested, but the idea is not mentioned in the most recent transportation strategy document, though it does discuss need for a "regional transit strategy" (CRD June 2002: 34).

By-law 2952 position on Transportation

The CRD's goal is to develop a "balanced and sustainable transportation system providing residents with reasonable and affordable transportation choices that enhance overall regional quality of life." This objective is to be achieved through inter-related initiatives.

Co-ordinating land use and transportation initiatives should increase transportation mode choices and cut reliance on cars. Density increases and more complete communities should facilitate this to some extent simply by placing people and the places they go closer together. In addition, the CRD plans to develop a Regional Transportation Strategy within two years of approval of the Regional Growth Strategy. It aims to support the sustainable transportation objective by increasing alternative transportation choices by giving walking, cycling and transit preference over single-occupant automobile travel.

Priorities are to provide sufficient infrastructure to facilitate walking, cycling and transit as effective modes of commuting, ensure a safe major street system and avoid traffic through neighbourhoods, limit additional future road capacity, facilitate the movement of goods and emergency vehicles, and set targets for air quality improvement.

Measures currently under consideration include implementing a continuous regional cycling network, dedicated bus and transit lanes, and an express bus route from the Western Communities into the core. The express bus corridor would lay the foundation for a light rail system if and when future densities justify the substantial infrastructure and maintenance costs. A Sub-Committee¹⁷ has already been formed to co-ordinate a Regional Cycling Strategy and provide a forum for stakeholders to discuss regional cycling issues. Further, many municipalities have established cycling advisory committees to incorporate cycling strategies into their official community plans that are consistent with a regional network.

Performance targets (over 25 years) include increasing non-auto peak period trips to ten percent for the region as a whole, and 40 percent for all trips to, from and within the

¹⁷ The Regional Cycling Sub-Committee is comprised of municipal staff and representatives of cycle advisory committees, bicycle organizations and provincial agencies.

metropolitan core; and, increasing journey-to-work trips by bicycle to 10 percent within the Victoria Census Metropolitan Area and to 15 percent from Victoria, Oak Bay, Esquimalt and urban Saanich (combined). Other targets will be set in the Regional Transportation Strategy.

Finally, within three years of Regional Growth Strategy approval the CRD hopes to sign an Implementation Agreement with the province and member municipalities to establish an enduring mechanism and associated funding for short, medium and long-term transportation planning.

Challenges

The above steps, combined with efforts favouring more complete communities and greater density should help shift demand to alternative transportation modes. Yet, to some extent, these initiatives will be needed just to resist well-established counter-trends. Transit ridership has remained static since 1990, and investment in car infrastructure has increased ten-fold since the early 1980's (CRD Roundtable on the Environment, 2002). Clearly, expansion of transit services must be accompanied by other supporting initiatives in order to encourage an actual shift in consumer choice to alternative transportation modes.

The regional plan does not explicitly incorporate transportation demand management measures such as disincentives or other policy initiatives to discourage car use, or programs to change behaviour. It merely recognizes the need and passes the burden of finding solutions to the transportation strategy now in preparation. That burden is considerable. Although the majority of people claim to favour alternatives, attachment to the automobile is deeply ingrained and additional measures may be required to increase transit use by more than the 1-2 percent predicted by the *Technical Analysis*.

The transit system must be reasonably priced and convenient in order to encourage people to switch, but this often requires an initial outlay of money and infrastructure that can be justified only if the results increase ridership significantly. According to an earlier assessment of this issue (CRD, March 1997), BC Transit is expected to accommodate greater numbers of travelers by increasing peak hour operation, extending services and accessibility, improving partnerships with local businesses and education centres, and greatly increasing the fleet size over the next ten years. Just to maintain its current share of peak hour travel, however, the CRD bus fleet would have to be doubled and the Region fears that this might be "financially unrealistic" (CRD, December 1999: 17). Large investments in transit may also divert funds away from local walking and cycling infrastructure. A further challenge will be to provide efficient transit options to lower density residential and business areas outside of core and corridor transit routes (CRD, March 1997).

The coming Regional Transportation Strategy must be well integrated into regional and municipal decision making on land use and community design (SISCN, 1998) as well as inter-regional and provincial decision making on transportation links. A major difficulty will be in determining just what kind of regional co-ordination might be acceptable to the participating municipalities, and what kinds of associated cost accounting arrangements would be effective, efficient and fair. Consensus on, and consistent implementation of, inter-municipal requirements (such as signage, cycling trails, designated right-of-way lanes for express transit, etc.) may also prove elusive.

Economic Development

Context

The majority of the region's economy is currently in service industries related to government, finance, tourism and retail. The CRD has identified a range of continuing and new factors that will influence its future economy. It recognizes, for example, that future economic opportunities, including employment, will be affected by the Region's relatively large numbers of retirement age individuals and the likelihood that continuing in-migration will bring additional numbers of older people. The CRD also expects that alternative communication options, which allow a growing percentage of the population to work from home, may have significant effects, for example on transportation and housing requirements (CRD, October 1996).

Overall, however, economic development remains an area of uncertainty for the region. Despite the fact that most residents in the CRD enjoy a relatively high standard of living, the area has considered itself economically underdeveloped for at least 25 years (CRD, 2001). In 1996, the rate of economic growth was about two percent annually, but this is expected to decrease to less than one percent (CitySpaces *et al.*, 2000). In addition, competing aspirations have led to some tensions among the municipalities. The Region reports that its current information on economic and employment matters is poor, that there is "no consensus on appropriate economic development in the Capital Region..." (CRD, December 1999: 19).

The public agrees (88 percent by random survey) that the CRD should co-ordinate a regional economic development strategy incorporating broad interests and a regional perspective, rather than leave this task to the business sector alone. The survey also revealed that it is preferable to concentrate jobs in mixed use areas instead of commercial and industrial districts where no housing is located. Respondents emphasized the need to integrate the plan with other aspects of the Regional Growth Strategy such as transportation, housing affordability and resource use. Development that supports diversification, small-scale businesses, and high ecological values is fundamental to achieving a sustainable regional economy (SISCN, 1998).

Understandably, the CRD municipalities, with their different compositions and aspirations, have divergent views on economic development. The greatest uncertainty surrounds what regional co-ordination may entail and how it will be implemented within the individual jurisdictions. Companies wishing to locate to the CRD will have to consider and negotiate all of these factors in deciding whether and how they will do business in the region.

By-law 2952 position on Economic Development

The CRD aims to make economic prosperity a foundation for maintaining and enhancing the already high quality of life in the region. To achieve this goal, it has sought partnerships with a cross-section of business and community interests, member municipalities and the provincial and federal governments to create an Economic Development Strategy, and co-ordinate its implementation. The CRD recognizes it is

subject to wider economic forces over which it has little control. Nonetheless, it can influence the effect these circumstances have locally.

The economic strategy must address significant growth management and quality of life issues, such as the revitalization of the Metropolitan Core, job creation and distribution for a variety of skill levels, the shortage of industrial land, long-term resource supply, and reducing poverty. The plan suggests building on existing strengths as well as identifying means for increasing diversification. In particular, actions must be taken to retain and cultivate existing employment sectors and firms, as well as to attract and cultivate new ones. In general, there is an acknowledged need to streamline regulations to encourage investment and business development.

The strategy will focus on opportunities in the unique natural surroundings, tourism, clean industry, the Victoria International Airport, national defence and government services. Specific areas to develop include skilled services, advanced technology, primary and value-added natural resource industries (e.g. specialized agriculture, forestry, fisheries and aggregates), film making and the arts, higher education, health, light manufacturing, and home-based businesses. Finding fair and effective ways to support agriculture is also noted.

Challenges

Economic direction has significant influence over the amount, type and location of growth, and on the potential for sustainability. Economic development in the CRD will have to adapt to changing economic and workforce needs, but anticipatory efforts are needed immediately. Further delay in developing a comprehensive region-wide strategy will undermine hopes for a diverse economy with jobs for a range of skill levels. In addition, a continuing sluggish economy has a negative impact on sectors dependent upon economic vibrancy such as the arts, culture and sports (CitySpaces *et al.*, 2000).

On a conceptual level, the CRD's economic development strategy is off to a good start insofar as it recognizes that "economic health is linked to social, environmental and community health generally" (CRD, January 2001a: 4). What must also be considered, however, is how actions taken to vitalize the economy will affect population growth and all other aspects of the growth management strategy. Some people have made it clear that they would rather see slower growth and the likely ensuing slower economy, than experience the negative impacts of more growth attracted by a strong economy. Quality of life characteristics are becoming increasingly important criteria in corporate decisions on locating new facilities and attracting potential employees. The CRD is in a good position to promote amenities and lifestyle features as advantages it has over other urban centres in close proximity. At the same time, however, it must avoid undermining these benefits in the course of accommodating higher levels of economic development. Because new industries attracted to the region can add to pressures on the local ecosystems and communities, the Region has reason to be selective about the kinds of new employers that it seeks and diligent in encouraging all employers to maintain and enhance the region's quality of life.

Such a degree of regional direction may not be possible through imposition, however. Although businesses will welcome increased support from various levels of government, they may also resent restrictions or regulations designed to direct the type, location, and

other aspects of business usually left to the influence of market factors. A more sophisticated combination of educational, economic and policy tools may be needed here.

An additional serious complication is the anticipated shortage of commercial and industrial land, which could increase significantly the cost of doing business in the CRD.

Implementation

Context

Whenever the Region has elicited input from the public, strong support has been given to regionally co-ordinated management of growth, transportation and economic development, which clearly exceed municipal boundaries. Historically, municipalities have enjoyed considerable autonomy in both setting the goals and implementing planning decisions. Although the draft by-law now provides regional goals, implementation remains largely in the hands of the individual municipalities and is therefore uncertain. Published comments on the draft Regional Growth Strategy have revealed concern that no studies had been done to assess the costs to municipalities for implementing the Strategy. As well, municipalities and public commentators have worried about the absence of formal consideration of how the Regional Growth Strategy might affect housing prices and economic development. The CRD Board has stated that the Regional Economic Development and the Housing Affordability strategies will address these issues.

Some confusion has also surrounded the role that the CRD would play in implementation. Officially, the Region's role is to ensure that Regional Growth Strategy objectives and goals are met, while the municipalities decide how best to do so within their own jurisdiction. The Region (and the Province) can also bring financial or expert assistance to the process.

By-law 2952 position on Implementation

The by-law includes provisions to guide the implementation of actions defined in each of the priority areas. In summary, the *Strategy* requires

- a continuing process of planning and review centred on collaborative efforts to achieve long-term objectives and report on interim progress, including a comprehensive review and update of the Regional Growth Strategy every five years (or less at the Board's direction), plus an interim review and adjustments after three years to incorporate the Transportation, Economic Development, and Affordable Housing Strategies; and an interim review and definition of the Regional Urban Containment and Servicing boundary for the District of Sooke;
- monitoring and assessment of trends and progress toward goals (a table outlining quantitative Regional Growth Strategy targets by priority area is included as Appendix C to this report);
- a Master Implementation Agreement with the province (within two years), with key Regional Growth Strategy actions, the CRDs role in their implementation, and a process for inter-jurisdictional review of regionally significant development;
- Regional Context Statements (within two years) in the official community plans of each of the member municipalities, explaining how it will implement its Regional Growth Strategy commitments;

- Corporate Implementation Strategy (within one year) for the CRD to demonstrate how its by-laws, services and spending are consistent with the Regional Growth Strategy; and
- co-ordination/partnerships with First Nations and neighbouring jurisdictions to develop compatible and shared interests and initiatives.

Challenges

Much of the criticism of the Regional Growth Strategy is directed towards prospects for its successful implementation. The planning process is essentially voluntary with broad goals and few enforceable stipulations. The British Columbia *Growth Strategies Act* requires only that municipalities create a common vision based on a sustainability agenda, and work together to carry it out. Regional Context Statements and Implementation Agreements are the only tools provided. The municipalities are given considerable flexibility in fulfilling their commitments. Non-compliance carries no legal consequences and no certain political ones. Sooner or later there will be ecological, social and economic consequences, but these are not always recognized in immediate decision making. It seems, then, that growth management planning will succeed only to the degree and extent that all parties are willing. To many this appears to be a weak foundation for effective implementation.

At the same time, there are good grounds for concluding that forcing a sustainable vision and initiatives on a reluctant populace and hostile municipalities will never work. While some further enhancement of regional authority is conceivable and likely necessary, this cannot be expected to be dramatic or sufficient on its own. It is discomfiting, but perhaps unavoidable, to conclude that effective growth management must also depend on fostering the enlightened self-interest of municipalities and residents in the region to bring about their own sustainable future.

Related Initiatives

The Regional Growth Strategy work is linked to several other initiatives that together have significantly increased attention to sustainability in the CRD. The Green/Blue Spaces Strategy (CRD, October 1997) defines the region's green infrastructure. Community groups such as the South Island Sustainable Communities Network (SISCN), many individual municipal initiatives, and the strong network of community associations opposing large scale developments are all having an impact on the outcome of the Regional Growth Strategy. Several examples at different scales are described in the following sections.

Regional Level

Green/Blue Spaces Strategy

First proposed in 1995, the *Green/Blue Spaces Strategy* was developed by CRD Parks, and the Provincial Capital Commission with major contributions from citizens, community groups and other stakeholders. In November 1997, following public meetings

and consultations, the Strategy was endorsed by the CRD Board and the Provincial Capital Commission, the provincial administrative agency that addresses issues relating to the aesthetic and cultural functions of the capital of the province. It has since been incorporated into the Regional Growth Strategy as a foundation document.

Regional green and blues spaces are defined broadly:

Natural and semi-natural areas, both land and water, that are of ecological, scenic, renewable resource, outdoor recreation and/or greenway value. These areas are considered to have high ecological and/or social value as green/blue spaces. Green/blue space areas could include developed, partly developed or undeveloped public and private spaces (CRD and PCC 1997).

The *Strategy* identifies why and which regional green and blue spaces should be protected, and sets out recommendations for community and government action to achieve this protection. It outlines a regional green/blue spaces system comprising the "green infrastructure" part of the regional infrastructure that is essential for creating a livable and healthy region. The overall regional infrastructure is thus understood to include sewers, water supply, transportation, solid waste disposal, and green/blue spaces.

The system of green/blue spaces is composed of four principal parts:

- Green/Blue Space Core Areas (existing parks, valuable unprotected land and marine environments, and the region's water supply lands)
- Greenways (corridors that link green/blue spaces)
- Renewable Resource Working Landscapes (agricultural and managed forest lands)
- Valuable Remnant Ecosystems (sensitive environmental lands not included in green/blue space core areas)

Natural areas, agricultural and crown forest and forest land reserves, parks, and CRD water lands are about 60 percent of the regional land base (CRD December 1999). Of these lands, ten percent is in the agricultural land reserve, 12 percent managed forests, and 35 percent CRD water lands supplying the water for much of the region. About one quarter of the regional land base is sensitive ecosystem, 60 percent of which is in public ownership as forest, water supply or parkland and provides the core green/blue spaces in the region. Only 7.2 percent of the region is protected in park status, which includes federal, provincial, regional and municipal parks (CRD Parks December 1998).

In September 1999, efforts to implement the Green/Blue Spaces Strategy were rejuvenated through a public workshop. Sponsored by the Capital Regional District Parks Department, the Provincial Capital Commission, the Eco-Research Chair of Environmental Law and Policy at the University of Victoria, and the local land trust, the Habitat Acquisition Trust, the workshop had two roles. It provided an opportunity to get further direction on how to implement the Strategy, and it was a venue for community organizations to share success stories and receive some skills training in the areas of fundraising, working with the media, advocacy and volunteer mobilization.

The strong community response at the workshop, and the many implementation recommendations, demonstrated significant commitment to the Strategy as a critical tool for achieving green and blue spaces protection in the CRD (Curran 1999b). Unanimous recommendations called for a regional land stewardship office to act as a clearinghouse for information and networking among groups and government agencies, a stronger link between the Green/Blue Spaces Strategy and the Regional Growth Strategy, and more

educational mechanisms by which the public can be informed of stewardship initiatives and through which different groups can share successes.

South Island Sustainable Communities Network

This Network, a loose association of community organizations, has worked to ensure adequate attention to sustainability considerations in development of the Regional Growth Strategy. It was formed after the CRD released the initial, business as usual Official Community Plan Option for the Region's future. This option was roundly rejected by the public and seemed to indicate that the CRD needed outside encouragement and guidance to elaborate more sustainable options. To provide this, concerned individuals drafted a report outlining substantive growth strategy steps to achieve a sustainable community over the long term. *A Capital Idea: Alternative Approaches to Growth Management in the Capital Regional District* (SISCN, 1998) documented the types of growth management measures currently used in many jurisdictions in North America, and related them to the CRD.

Perhaps more important than the content of the report was its endorsement by over 45 community associations including wealthy ratepayers groups, an anti-poverty coalition, and environmental organizations. The report, distributed to every member of the CRD Board, was well-received and considered by both staff and local government politicians.

Along with other thoughtful submissions from individual community groups at the public forum in April 1998, *A Capital Idea* helped shift some of the fundamental premises of the Regional Growth Strategy work. The positions taken by the CRD and municipal governments, as outlined in *Foundations for Our Future* and other growth strategy process documents, began to focus more explicitly on sustainability. Progressive and innovative measures such as urban containment and transportation demand management were presented as basic components for any strategy that would be adopted.

A wider benefit of the Network's report was that many community organizations with neither the time nor the expertise to be deeply involved in the Regional Growth Strategy process were able to participate in putting forward innovative ideas. While none of the groups necessarily spoke with each other or shared ideas, taking a regional approach to local community groups could be the beginning of more comprehensive civil society co-ordination on regional issues in the CRD.

Municipal Level

Several municipalities in the CRD have already enshrined urban containment and densification of built areas as core strategies. Moreover, they have undertaken some interesting and attractive redevelopments and neighbourhoods that may be models for sustainability in the region. The City of Victoria and District of Saanich, both of which are largely built out, are turning to underutilized industrial and other land to revitalize older areas and create vibrant neighbourhoods.

For example, the Selkirk Waterfront development, located on the Gorge Waterway less than two kilometres from downtown Victoria, is being constructed on an old industrial site. Adjacent to the Galloping Goose Regional Trail and close to downtown,

this mixed-use development has incorporated many sustainability features. The streets are brick, to reduce the toxicity of the runoff, provide for some infiltration, and attenuate the summer heat. Traffic calming is achieved through winding roads, narrow streets and road surface texture. As a mixed-use development, the site accommodates industrial, commercial, institutional (a school) and residential uses. The ground-floors of all commercial buildings are designed for retail stores.

Similarly innovative, the District of Saanich established an urban containment boundary in the 1960's and has maintained that boundary with very little change. The District concentrates growth in already-serviced areas, and is now focusing on redeveloping neighbourhood cores into pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly centres. In 1998, the District held a design charrette to create a vision for the Quadra/McKenzie corridor – a major transportation intersection and two block commercial area adjacent to the Galloping Goose Regional Trail and Blenkinsop Creek. With participation from municipal staff and politicians, landowners, residents, business owners and the public, the charrette resulted in a design that would see residential uses intensified around the centre, rehabilitation of the Creek, and creation of a friendlier neighbourhood atmosphere in the midst of traffic.

In 1999, to facilitate more effective protection of the natural environment, the District of Saanich completed an *Environmentally Sensitive Areas Atlas* documenting site-specific environmentally sensitive areas (District of Saanich 1999). One of the first of its kind in Canada, this ground-truthed atlas assists the local government, developers, and the public to identify and better accommodate environmentally sensitive areas in the preparation and evaluation of development applications. Using aerial photos as well as descriptions of each parcel of land, the atlas provides baseline biological and hydrological information. A developer who would be required to conduct baseline studies, can use this information and then tailor any further studies to the unique conditions of the site. The atlas can also be used for prioritizing stewardship and restoration needs and opportunities.

Also in 1999, the District of Saanich sent a motion to the CRD Board encouraging the region to begin discussions with BC Transit and other provincial government agencies and corporations to create a regional transportation authority (Leonard 1999). The suggestion was based on the emerging experience in the Greater Vancouver Regional District with the regional transportation authority there, and the need for a co-ordinated transportation strategy under the Regional Growth Strategy. Although the draft Regional Growth Strategy specifies a partnership between the province and member municipalities to develop a Regional Transportation Strategy and a framework for planning, governance and funding, it does not explicitly mention the creation of a regional transportation authority.

Community Level

Many community associations and neighbourhoods continue to call for a halt to new developments with possibly regrettable regional impacts until the Regional Growth Strategy is completed. Conflicts over new developments are focused in two areas – large-scale suburban residential and commercial developments and larger infill developments.

The issues arising from these developments relate to urban containment and equity, in light of the local impacts of densification and concerns about affordable housing.

In one conflict, the Association for the Protection of Rural Metchosin and the Coalition for a Better Colwood have led a fight against the Royal Bay development involving plans for 2800 new homes. The initial phase of 600 units will be built in a currently wooded area with the remainder replacing a still-productive gravel pit. Project defenders argue that it is mostly an already disturbed site and a relatively desirable place for new growth to be accommodated in a region with few other options. But opponents note that the proposed community, located adjacent to rural Metchosin, is far from any services including public transportation, and say it would offend the basic principles of effective growth management.

In East Sooke, some residents, including the Catholic Order, Sisters of St. Ann's, have aggressively challenged a proposal to develop the 60 hectare waterfront Silver Spray Ranch property. The developer proposes a marina and low density rural estate homes. Like the Royal Bay development, Silver Spray would increase traffic and significantly alter the rural landscape of the area.

A diversity of individuals and groups also opposed construction of a new commercial strip in the District of Langford. The main initial components were two mega-retail stores, Costco and Home Depot. The 5.61 hectare Costco component was built on an endangered Garry oak meadow. Construction on the adjacent Home Depot site destroyed 4.22 hectares of forest. As well, because it is located in a suburb and on a greenfield site, the development contributes to urban sprawl and increased automobile traffic regionally. Meanwhile, already serviced commercial sites in the area remain undeveloped.

In the urban core, densification is also a significant issue. The residents of many single family neighbourhoods favour growth management to protect rural lands and green space but they want the compensating densification to take place in other neighbourhoods. Some neighbourhoods, such as James Bay in Victoria, have already integrated greater than average density. Therefore, when a high-priced and high density condominium project was proposed for the last piece of developable land on the Inner Harbour, the James Bay Environment Committee opposed the development. The project offered some attractive qualities, including energy efficiency, and enjoyed the infill advantages of walking distance to core amenities and services. But the James Bay Committee argued that the Shoal Point development provided no affordable housing for the neighbourhood, and that James Bay already had its share of higher density projects. Another concern for growth management as a whole is that this development converted scarce industrial land into residential.

More broadly, strong networks of neighbourhood community associations and ratepayers groups have increasingly put local government accountability of the CRD member municipalities in the spotlight. In both Saanich and Victoria, neighbourhood-based groups maintain monthly contact to share information on land use issues and to coordinate strategies. This is accomplished through the Saanich Community Associations Network (SCAN) and the Community Associations Network in Victoria. SCAN also acts as a link between community groups and special municipal committees. When the District of Saanich was conducting a review of its development approvals process in 1998, two representatives from SCAN were appointed as community members. The outcome of the

review was communicated to all the neighbourhood associations, and thus to their members, through SCAN.

Overall, healthy civic interest in land use and growth management issues in the CRD has raised the profile of the Regional Growth Strategy process and its potential implications in the region significantly. At the same time, the sophistication of the discussion about growth management issues and tradeoffs has increased. Largely because of these local issues, public involvement and interest have surged at different times during the development of the Regional Growth Strategy. What would otherwise appear to be an abstract planning exercise dealing with the more or less distant future is brought home when local development issues flare.

PROSPECTS FOR THE CRD REGIONAL GROWTH STRATEGY

The vision and goals of *By-law 2952* include much of what might be possible in a wish list for urban sustainability. If achieved they would reduce urban sprawl, protect environmentally sensitive areas, foster more diverse communities, increase transportation efficiency and reduce automobile use. Implemented to its fullest, the result would be a more sustainable CRD.

This section looks at the prospects for the CRD Regional Growth Strategy in reaching its stated goals, recognizing that the process is unfinished and all conclusions must be tentative. The road ahead remains long and uncertain. The proposed by-law is still the subject of negotiations. Even if the by-law is approved without substantial changes, questions will remain about the likely effectiveness of its implementation. Many potential trade-offs, inherent tensions and external influences will play a part in the ultimate success of the Regional Growth Strategy.

The Road Ahead

By-law 2952 is still not approved. Two of the CRD member municipalities have dissatisfactions that could not be resolved in the review process and the matter is now before the provincial minister, who is expected to initiate mediation or arbitration. A strength of the *Growth Strategies Act* is its provision of escalating mechanisms for conflict resolution and in the end it is very likely that a Regional Growth Strategy document will be adopted. While the result may depart in some ways from the provisions of the draft by-law, the departures may not be great.

Whether the final document will provide an adequate base for managing growth and fostering sustainability in the CRD is less certain. Comments at the public hearing in April 2002 (CRD, 2002), suggest that many participants in the process believe the plan has already been weakened since its previous incarnation as the *Proposed Regional Growth Strategy* (March, 2001). They point to the retitling of Environmentally Sensitive Policy Areas as Unprotected Greenspace (a perceived, if not legal, demotion) and the removal of all implementation targets for securing these valuable lands. As well they note persistently weak attention to social issues and to the significant expansion of the Regional Urban Containment and Servicing area. For example, to get approval from Langford, the municipality was allowed to include its entire area within the urban containment boundary. Sooke was allowed to defer defining its containment boundary,¹⁸ also raising concerns about further expansion. Flexibility on urban containment may be the most worrisome signal for advocates of strong growth management, who see firm limits on further sprawl as a foundation for the whole exercise. Nonetheless, optimists maintain that even an imperfect growth management document is a step forward and that

¹⁸ This was judged to be an appropriate exception since the Regional Growth Strategy work was well advanced when Sooke gained municipal status.

the value of planning for growth and sustainability at a regional level will become more apparent over time.

Implementation will be key. The CRD has little absolute authority and is in any event essentially a collective of municipal representatives. Successful implementation of the Strategy will therefore depend heavily on the efforts of growth management advocates in the CRD and elsewhere to initiate dialogues, communicate the issues and clarify options for the municipalities, concerned citizens, provincial agencies and other political bodies with a role in strategy implementation.

Delivering What It Promised?

In accord with provincial legislation, the CRD Regional Growth Strategy has a very broad scope. It covers social, economic and ecological considerations and spans a 25 year time frame. The strategy rests on a regional vision that will be translated, more or less specifically, into commitments by the affected municipalities. If and when the Regional Growth Strategy is approved by member municipalities, it will be implemented through the adoption of Regional Context Statements in each municipality's Official Community Plans and through Implementation Agreements between the Region, the province and other bodies detailing how aspects of the Regional Growth Strategy will be carried out.

The proposed by-law addresses most of the 14 provincial growth management objectives listed in Box 4. The bounded urban growth containment and servicing area and efforts to focus density in complete communities in a nodal/corridor pattern are clearly a response to many of the issues that arise in providing for the needs of a growing population in an efficient and economic manner. The Green/Blue Spaces strategy adopted into the Regional Growth Strategy addresses environmental objectives such as protecting sensitive areas and lands surrounding water sources, maintaining productive land bases (agricultural and forest reserves), and linking urban and rural areas. Economic development, transportation and housing affordability will be dealt with in separate strategies that start from the basic premises and principles of the Regional Growth Strategy and will be incorporated at a later date. Attention to some other objectives, such as pollution abatement, is provided implicitly in various priority areas identified in the plan. Thus, the content of CRD Regional Growth Strategy has incorporated most of the provincial intent, and also addressed important aspects of overarching sustainability, well-being and quality of life objectives. (The extent to which these goals will be met adequately is discussed in the Analysis section below.)

The Regional Growth Strategy has not directly included attention to provincial objectives concerning energy and water. The document does not set out a plan for energy supply or alternative energy forms, even though the already high consumption rates in the CRD undermine claims to sustainability improvements. Water use in the CRD is a longstanding area of concern and controversy. Shortages have already been experienced, yet overall and per capita consumption is expected to rise (CitySpaces *et al.*, 2000). It would have been reasonable to expect the strategy to include programs for public education, reduction and efficiency for both non-renewable and renewable resources.

A second area of neglect is stewardship of lands, sites and structures with cultural heritage value. The oversight was noted in comments on the proposed strategy draft, but

CRD staff responded that this was not a component of the regional vision which was the foundation for the growth strategy.

In the early stages of discussions about the alternative growth options and technical analysis, the CRD approved evaluation criteria (see Appendix B) that emphasize aspects of the regional vision.¹⁹ These criteria were to be used as reference points during the process and later in the creation of a monitoring program. Whether the criteria will be met will only become evident over time.

A greater concern is that no monitoring program was developed in the preparation of the strategy. Some residents and politicians are now afraid that the money and resources required to draft and implement such a program will not be available given provincial funding cuts and diversion of the remaining funds to other implementation concerns (CRD, 2002).

The provincial law requires a comprehensive five-year review of the Regional Growth Strategy, and requires regional districts that adopt a growth strategy to monitor its implementation and report annually. But ensuring that this work is done well enough to be useful is another matter. Careful monitoring is likely to be needed to encourage continued attention to the goals of the Regional Growth Strategy, to identify what areas need more attention or resource allocation, and to inform civil society discussion by giving residents and politicians better understanding of the benefits and limitations of growth management planning in the region.

Potential Trade-Offs

Arguably, all of the major objectives of the CRD strategy are desirable. But they are not necessarily compatible, at least not always. In practice, implementation is likely to involve some conflicts and trade-offs. Setting priorities and resolving conflicts in the public interest will be a major challenge and the extent to which the CRD succeeds in this task will be a key determinant of the ultimate effectiveness of the process.

- **Urban Containment vs. Other Land Uses (within the Regional Urban Containment and Servicing Area)**

Restricting the area available for development is likely to intensify competition between land uses within the containment area. Green/blue spaces that are not formally protected will be under the most intense pressure as density increases. There are also predictable conflicts between land demands for residential and business development purposes, especially because lands for industrial uses are already scarce.

- **Urban Containment vs. Quality of Life**

Although increased density can have positive effects such as more vibrant, culturally diverse centres and greater transit efficiency, there is also risk of negative aspects including greater traffic congestion, and more concentrated pollution and resource use.

¹⁹ The *Technical Analysis* also suggested a long list of possible indicators that are not included in this report.

Deterioration of neighbourhoods and common lands, decreased safety and security, and loss of a sense of community can also occur if in-fill development is not carefully planned and designed.

- **Urban Containment vs. Housing Affordability**
In a region where housing is already expensive, additional constraints on the amount of land available for housing will likely drive prices higher. The Housing Affordability Strategy must address rental and ownership for people of a variety of income levels, age-groups and special needs.
- **Population Growth Pressures vs. Environmental Quality**
Even though long term environmental quality considerations were incorporated into the draft Regional Growth Strategy by-law, previous analysis on the four alternatives predicted departures from environmental sustainability due to greater pollution, higher resource use, more waste, and increased pressure on (and possibly deterioration of) green/blue spaces.
- **Fast-growing Economy vs. Slow Population Growth Preferences**
Revitalising the economy is a central goal of the Regional Growth Strategy, yet this could attract more than the moderate population growth assumed by the planning process. More people will bring more human demands on ecosystems and social services. In addition, it may displease the majority of residents who state that, in order to maintain a high quality of life, they would rather see growth that is slower than anticipated.
- **Fast-growing Economy vs. Industrial/Commercial Lands**
More rapid economic expansion is likely to exacerbate shortages of land zoned and serviced for commercial and industrial purposes and increase pressures to expand the urban containment and servicing area. Scarcity of industrial/commercial land will also make it more expensive and harder to obtain, reducing the attractiveness for new business to locate to the CRD.
- **Economic Growth vs. Natural Resources and Greenlands**
Plans to focus economic growth in niche-market agriculture and forestry and opportunities in eco-tourism will have to take care not to compromise these resources beyond their sustainable use. Most new businesses are likely to entail some increases in demand for resources such as water, aggregates and power, and generate more waste, possibly affecting both the character and integrity of the environment.
- **Express Transportation vs. Local Modes**
Developing road and express transit infrastructure to move people and goods efficiently between core and outlying communities may divert investment and resources away from local transportation initiatives for bus service, walking and cycling within centres and suburbs.

- **Low- vs. Higher-density Housing**
 Demand for single-detached homes remains high. There is a requirement for ground-oriented units to accommodate families with children. As well, many feel high-rise apartment buildings adversely affect the character of neighbourhoods. In this context the challenge will be to encourage more welcoming attitudes to higher density housing options to allow more infilling within the Regional Urban Containment and Servicing area. In addition to focusing initial densification in certain core areas, some experts have suggested identifying "residential reserves" for later densification in the containment area.
- **Local Protectionism vs. Regional Vision**
 Some compromises (e.g. accepting increased density and commercial/industrial development in residential areas) will have to be made in recipient neighbourhoods and municipalities to satisfy the regional plan. Unless densification options can be made genuinely attractive to existing neighbourhoods, and unless the distribution of compromises and sacrifices is broadly accepted as equitable, the tension between local choice and regional growth management needs is likely to undermine growth management prospects.
- **Measurable Targets vs. Abstract Vision/Goals**
 The CRD's vision and broad goals for 2026 contain laudable aspects of quality of life and sustainability that may be lost in implementing the Regional Growth Strategy to conform to measurable targets. For example, accessibility to services is reduced to distance from locations or public transport, and ecological preservation is based on percentage of greenspace (vs. health or integrity). While these indicators are useful and reasonable, care must be taken not to erode the spirit of the plan and thus its outcome.
- **Local/Regional Activities vs. Other Regional Authorities**
 The draft by-law has received formal acceptance by the adjacent Cowichan Valley Regional District, but in general, neighbouring governments, including the Island Trust, the Cowichan Valley Regional District and First Nations, which are likely to affect and be affected by the CRD's Regional Growth Strategy process have had minimal involvement in the strategy development process. Whether this will result in unanticipated growth pressures and conflicts remains to be seen.
- **Local/Regional Activities vs. Global Effects**
 The CRD's ecological footprint (Wackernagel and Rees, 1996) and other broader influences contribute to global conditions upon which life in the CRD depends. The materially and energy intensive quality of life, which most CRD residents enjoy or seek, cannot be maintained and shared without several more planets with equivalent carrying capacity. The Regional Growth Strategy generally disregards the larger sustainability agenda and gives little attention to means of reducing material and energy demand. While growth management may have a broadly beneficial effect on transportation efficiencies, for example, pursuing sustainability at the regional level does not necessarily ensure actions that benefit the biosphere.

Inherent Tensions and Mitigating Factors

In addition to resolving conflicts, there are some internal tensions in the concept and substance of the Regional Growth Strategy and process. Mitigating factors that may sway opposing views are also present. How these issues play out could have a major impact on the content and effectiveness of the final Regional Growth Strategy.

Regional Interest

Defining regional interest in the CRD is not easy. It is not obvious who should decide what the regional interest is, and whose opinion on competing choices should prevail. The CRD, as a regional body comprised of appointed municipal members seeking consensus on regional issues, has limited popular and political authority to provide clear direction and enforce its decisions.

A high degree of consensus was achieved in the *Framework for Our Future* document as a basis for the strategy development work. Both municipalities and the public felt it effectively described the challenges and opportunities for a sustainable region. But it focused on principles and priorities, rather than implementable positions. Achieving agreement on the Regional Growth Strategy itself has proved more challenging and it seems that the full suite of conflict resolution mechanisms provided in the *Growth Strategies Act* will have to be used.

Agreement even on appropriate general approaches has also been difficult in some priority areas such as economic development, where strategic design is still on-going in the face of divided opinion on the appropriate amount of growth for the CRD, and what that growth would bring to the region. Residents of CRD municipalities that already enjoy a high quality of life generally feel that growth should be limited. But some municipalities and residents believe that quality of life can only be improved by sustained economic expansion. For example, they anticipate using tax levies from development to build needed facilities (as was done for the fire hall in Langford).

While supporting the Regional Growth Strategy in principle, municipalities, neighbourhoods and residents are hesitant to make sacrifices or compromises that would benefit the sustainability of the region. For example, some strong rural advocates for the protection of the environment and urban containment refuse to support transportation strategies that would limit automobile use or make it more expensive. They demand the best of both worlds – the ability to live rurally, a 20 minute drive from downtown Victoria, and have private automobile access to urban amenities without facing the actual costs that automobile use imposes on the region as a whole. Other instances, such as neighbourhoods unwilling to accept more density or mixed development in their area, suggest that some people may not be willing to go far enough to allow sufficient growth management in the Region.

Some community groups and members of the public take an explicitly regional approach, arguing that effective regional authority is a prerequisite for successful growth management. Most people, however, seem to favour a mix of neighbourhood, municipal

and regional mandates. Where local concerns prevail, regional objectives may be difficult to achieve. Yet none wish to see social well-being degraded, so there may be more willingness to foster sympathy and understanding between diverse points of view than is at first apparent.

Political Will

Even within the guiding parameters provided by a Regional Growth Strategy, a host of factors, including the actual rate and distribution of growth, the percentage of older residents, and character of economic expansion, will affect changes in the CRD between now and 2026. Though modifications to the Regional Growth Strategy are possible and desirable, a strong commitment to managing growth and sustainability must endure throughout changing circumstances, even as the political context changes. This is a difficult task given the short term in office of most politicians and the consequent tendency to focus on immediate goals and reactionary planning.

British Columbia's *Growth Strategy Act* requires at least some attention to long-term growth management planning. The Regional Growth Strategy itself encourages some endurance of growth management controls by permitting amendment to the Regional Urban Containment and Servicing area or addition of a Major Centre only following a comprehensive five-year review of the plan. The requirement that all municipalities must agree to any amendments should discourage retreats and, at very least, force debate and transparency on specific issues. A high degree of participation by all stakeholders is essential to keeping political goals aligned with the regional vision and public interest.

To complicate matters, the provincial Liberal government has announced plans for a review of the *Growth Strategy Statutes Amendments Act* in 2004. Perhaps more worrisome are the recent cuts to the funds available to regions for growth management strategy implementation. While the CRD may be able to respond with creative low cost initiatives, the new circumstances will favour efforts that bring short term returns and will discourage investments that promise more effective growth management over the long run.

Municipal and Inter-jurisdictional Co-operation

Seven years into the Regional Growth Strategy process, it is clear that regional scale co-operation remains difficult. Tensions among municipalities and between municipalities and the CRD remain. Some municipal councils are determined to protect their land use planning autonomy and are not willing to accept regional dictates; others apparently fear commitments that may entail future costs. As well, a general sense that costs and benefits are not fairly distributed throughout the region tends to encourage jurisdictional jealousy and local protectionism. For example, rural municipalities are tempted to conclude that although they have shared in the cost of developing the Regional Growth Strategy, most implementation efforts and resources will be spent in the core areas for economic development, revitalizing downtowns, etc.. In the CRD, as elsewhere, these factors push growth management strategy development to focus on lowest common denominators where consensus can be achieved.

At the same time, the successful negotiation of the proposed by-law has demonstrated a willingness among municipal politicians to resolve at least some tensions in pursuit of a viable plan. As well, they have already acted in accordance with the regional vision with initiatives such as the Green/Blue Spaces Strategy and the Regional Cycling Strategy, where positive benefit to all is clear. The forthcoming development and implementation of Regional Context Statements within the municipal official community plans will be the true test of whether a stronger regional vision will emerge. But regional discussion and implementation efforts so far are encouraging and the potential for further co-operation should not be underestimated.

Difficulties also surround the need to co-ordinate actions with bodies beyond the CRD. The challenges include procuring the necessary financial and legislative support from the provincial and federal governments in areas that warrant their involvement, such as transportation and affordable housing. More tentative is the CRD's relationship with neighbouring regions and, especially, First Nations. Their participation in the Regional Growth Strategy process has been disappointing, even though they were invited to take part at several stages. This minimal involvement is understandable insofar as it is due to the First Nations' needs to devote their limited resources to other key deliberations, including treaty negotiations.²⁰ Persistence in building actively co-operative relations will nevertheless be needed since adjacent jurisdictions will affect, and be affected by, planning outcomes in the CRD.

CRD Growth Management and Broader Sustainability Efforts

One of the most remarkable global phenomena in the years following the 1992 Rio Summit on Environment and Development has been the important role of regional and municipal governments and civil society groups in applying sustainability principles. Small cities especially have been leaders in practical initiatives linking local action with global purposes. In this context the CRD's growth management efforts are disappointing. The Regional Growth Strategy exercise recognized sustainability objectives but rarely looked beyond the regional context and failed to pursue demand management initiatives, even for water and energy. There was little effort to link initiatives in the region with broader efforts to reduce the ecological footprint of wealthy cities, promote ecological restoration and reduce global inequities.

In its work to ensure respect for collective interests on the regional level, the CRD has, for example, suggested that tactics to combat NIMBY attitudes be incorporated into the pending Transportation, Economic Development and Housing Affordability strategies. The growth strategy deliberations seem not to have given much attention to how the region could serve the broader collective interests beyond the CRD boundaries.

²⁰ Deep historical clashes between some First Nations may also make them reluctant to sit at the same table, regardless of the purpose of the meeting.

External Influences

One of the less emphasized purposes of the *Regional Growth Strategy* is to manage external influences on the CRD. Rather than merely react to outside forces, the 25-year plan with periodic review is meant to anticipate future pressures and uncover ways to exploit opportunities as well as mitigate negative effects. Major external factors that could affect Regional Growth Strategy success include the following.

National and Global Economies

- A renewal of rapid economic growth coming out of a recessionary period could revitalize those industries dependent on a strong economic base, such as the arts and film, but also increase growth management challenges.
- Global market liberalization is expected to encourage specialization in areas of unique economic advantage, but counter trends are favouring local economic diversity and loyalty to known and trusted producers.
- Conventional economic growth pressures are likely to increase energy and material demand and associated trends away from sustainable practices, but may also open markets for technologies, services and other options that promise greater efficiencies, lower social and ecological risks, and less dependence on declining resources.

Actual Migration Patterns and Population Demographics

- Slower than expected growth would put less pressure on land use and the Regional Urban Containment and Servicing Area boundary. Greater than expected growth would intensify pressures but might also be linked with broader economic options and opportunities to select among more and less desirable economic paths.
- Population demographics that do not follow the anticipated increase in elderly residents may allow a de-emphasis of ground-oriented dwellings and shift demand to more housing for young families, for example.

Provincial and Federal Policy and Funding

- Amendments to legislative requirements or support structures in the *Growth Management Strategies Act* after the Liberal government's 2004 review may increase or decrease motivations and capacities to implement the Regional Growth Strategy. For example, the provision for appointing a provincial facilitator to assist in strategy development negotiations proved important in the CRD case. Elimination of this option could harm future growth strategy processes.
- Other provincial and federal policy shifts may change the context for the Regional Growth Strategy. Possibilities include cutbacks to provincial funding for municipal activities, revisions to the provincial regime for protection of agricultural lands, and amendment of fishery and forestry regulations.

Actions of Neighbouring Regions and First Nations

- The proximity of the CRD to the Cowichan Valley Regional District, the Islands Trust area, and First Nation lands where philosophic approaches and planning activities may be quite different, could serve to undermine or reinforce the Regional Growth Strategy. For example, protection of water supplies or greenspace in the

CRD will not be effective if these resources are abused just outside CRD boundaries. Conversely, positive external efforts could enhance the effectiveness of the Regional Growth Strategy.

Climate Change and Long-range Pollution Drift

- It is rarely disputed now that large-scale climate changes can have significant effects on local water supplies, agriculture, wild species, storm events, etc. The results can change population migration patterns and have significant economic, social and environmental costs.
- Air quality improvement efforts in the CRD could be defeated by pollution drifting from thousands of kilometres away.

Learning about Sustainability and Growth Management

- As the rest of British Columbia, Canada and the world become more aware of sustainability issues and options, sustainability values may shift to mainstream culture, and encourage more rapid development of appropriate technologies, management tools, planning practices and civic behaviour.
- Pressures for increased efficiency in resource use (e.g. of energy and water) nationally and globally may encourage more attention to these imperatives locally. As well, innovations in process design and technology more consistent with ecological principles, and the subsequent increased availability and lower cost of such measures, will provide efficiency improvements in the CRD.
- Sharing of innovative work by the CRD and other leading growth management jurisdictions could gradually build confidence, understanding and practice in growth management globally.

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSIONS

The CRD Regional Growth Strategy as a Tool for Sustainability

The CRD is a friendly testing ground for growth management through the essentially co-operative mechanism of the Regional Growth Strategy. People in the CRD have an enviable quality of life and are determined to keep it. Support for growth management, at least in principle, is widely shared in the public, private sector and government bodies at various levels. With rural municipalities wanting to remain rural, and urbanites itching for a more vibrant city, the CRD may be the British Columbia region most likely to be receptive and innovative in designing and implementing a Regional Growth Strategy.

Nevertheless, like other regions in the province and elsewhere, the CRD is constituted of municipalities with traditions of autonomy. It has a limited number of residents and property owners who are inclined to consider the regional interest before more immediate concerns. Its municipalities apply an established land-use planning system that was designed, and has traditionally been used, largely for accommodating rather than for managing growth. And it is still grappling with some of the basic notions underlying a commitment to sustainability.

Whether the Region will approve and implement a Regional Growth Strategy with a significant positive effect on sustainability by 2026 is yet to be revealed. We can, however, provide a tentative evaluation of how well the CRD Regional Growth Strategy process so far has served as a means of incorporating sustainability considerations into land-use planning and whether it might serve as a model for initiatives beyond the CRD.

The Regional Growth Strategy as a Tool for Sustainability in the CRD

The following interim analysis focuses on *By-law 2952* in the context of the particular municipal and regional government culture of the CRD. It considers the apparent effectiveness, efficiency and fairness of the process so far by applying the evaluation criteria outlined earlier in this report (see Research Methodology). A summary of the evident requirements for the Regional Growth Strategy to move the CRD successfully toward sustainability follows.

Effectiveness

The Regional Growth Strategy work sets a foundation for an effective contribution. *Sustainability* is formally recognized as an overall purpose of management, and definitions and principles of ecological, social and economic sustainability are included to clarify this intent. Many actions (e.g., protecting the natural environment, designing complete communities, diversifying the economy) contribute to well-being, but explicit attention to social issues such as poverty, equal opportunity and self-determination is weak. Whether the Regional Growth Strategy addresses intergenerational equity considerations

consciously and effectively is debatable, though there is an implicit effort to avoid long-term as well as more immediate damage due to growth. Fair distribution of the costs and benefits of growth management is the essence of current negotiations between and among municipalities, the public, and the private sector. Ultimately, through education and regional discussion, the CRD must develop a culture that translates abstract sustainability concepts into the fabric of everyday life.

As in other Canadian regions, the planning function in the CRD is essentially political and ecosystems are fragmented by municipal boundaries. Some significant aspects of the Regional Growth Strategy, such as the protection of ecologically sensitive areas, are appropriately *ecosystem-based*. But attention to cumulative effects and human impacts are not well integrated. Simply setting aside greenspace certainly does not ensure success in building or maintaining socio-ecological integrity (Kay and Regier, 2000). If more broadly used ecosystem oriented planning is too ambitious for the CRD, there should at least be more attention given to ecological functions at the regional scale and to adjacent incompatible land uses, particularly across jurisdictional boundaries. Some capacity for adapting to uncertainty and surprise (characteristic of ecosystem dynamics) is built into the Regional Growth Strategy through periodic plan reviews, but such a crucial dimension of planning should be made explicit.

The Regional Growth Strategy is largely *visionary* and *integrative*. The CRD incorporated many ideas for a feasible common vision of a sustainable region that includes dimensions of economy, environment and society. There was a high degree of agreement from all stakeholders in the original *Foundations for Our Future* definition of the objective. Moreover, involved citizens and a few municipalities continue to refocus the process on the ambitious goals at every opportunity.

Although the strategy has embraced the general concept of integrating economic, environmental and societal/community dimensions, there may not be sufficient understanding of what this means in practice. Many believe that there must always be trade-offs between, say, environmental protection and development, or between economic growth and social programs. While this is often true, planning for sustainability is about the creative design of mutually enhancing actions. Eco-tourism and affordable housing development surrounding greenspace and community gardens, are two examples.

Whether the strategy is effectively *implementable* and its results practically *measurable* remains to be seen. Many aspects of the Regional Growth Strategy appear to be amenable to practical implementation in ways that can be measured. The proposed Regional Growth Strategy report contains quantitative targets, most with time limits, for each of the priority areas.²¹ As well, some baseline information (e.g., regarding average commute times, transit ridership, protected areas, housing densities) has already been collected in the process and changes in relevant variables can easily be documented as the strategy is implemented. Measuring progress towards more comprehensive quality of life and sustainability objectives is much more of a challenge. Arguably, the design of the monitoring program has been left too long, and it is not certain that the resources will be available to do a credible job.

²¹ Notably, however, targets for the protection of natural areas were removed in negotiating *By-law 2952*, and replaced with wording to protect “as much as possible”. Many believe that this compromise has considerably weakened the document.

The legislated tools for growth management, especially the Regional Context Statements and Implementation Agreements, make reasonable implementation possible though not guaranteed. Perhaps the largest unknowns in the whole process are to what extent the implementable actions outlined in the proposed Strategy can be imposed, and to what extent individual municipalities will attempt to comply. Effective implementation will depend upon financial resources, technological capacity, citizen approval and political support. All of these factors involve the particular municipal cultures of the individual municipalities in the CRD. If political commitment and citizen approval are achieved in some areas but not in others, effective implementation of the overall regional strategy will be difficult.

Efficiency

It is not yet possible to assess whether the strategy process will prove *time and cost effective*. To date, seven years have been devoted to its development. Some observers believe that too much money was spent on visioning exercises and background research, even before political buy-in to the process was obtained. Most feel, however, that the nature of a participative consensual process, and legislative stipulations for a lengthy municipal referral period at each stage, necessarily slowed the process. Creative initiatives that benefit more than one area will increase time and cost effectiveness through the implementation phase.

The strategy has adopted a broad scope that is *comprehensive* of many urban sustainability factors, though it focuses largely on responses to population growth and does not attempt any overall analysis of effects on the Region's ecological footprint. Much of the specific work in comparing anticipated expenditures and benefits will be left to the individual municipalities as they determine what actions to take under the Regional Growth Strategy. Some are worried that many unexpected financial costs will emerge.

The primary purpose of the Regional Growth Strategy is to provide a *co-ordinated* approach to economic, ecological and social issues. Co-operation among municipalities and the CRD has nonetheless been challenging, due largely to tensions over municipal autonomy and control in planning. All legislative requirements for public consultation were met, and the CRD did make an admirable attempt to bring stakeholders willingly into the process. Involvement of neighbouring governments, especially local First Nations, has been quite limited however. Implementation Agreements should facilitate co-ordination of CRD work with the activities of other levels of government.

Though the Region has elicited public opinion and listened when concerned individuals advocated more attention to sustainability, *effective participation* of the public in the Regional Growth Strategy process has sometimes been frustrated. The timetable and process have been changed innumerable times, and the volume of materials generated has intimidated many community associations that might otherwise have become involved. Discontinuities in the process (during lengthy municipal referral periods) interrupted momentum and may have caused many citizens to lose interest in the process as well.

Fairness

Although the Regional Growth Strategy is intended to retain a high quality of life for residents and consider resource security, it does not explicitly incorporate a voice for

future generations or mechanisms for intergenerational planning. Its likely effects on intragenerational *equity*, too, are difficult to assess. The strategy does aim for more diverse and complete communities. Some municipalities may fear that they will bear more than their share of the costs for little benefit, however. Others intend to remain largely single family enclaves without affordable housing development. The extent that the regional interest wins out over local protectionism will determine equitable cost distribution.

As noted above, the Regional Growth Strategy process has had some limited success as a *participatory* approach. The CRD attempted to enlist the involvement of all municipalities, agencies and other government bodies. Anyone who wanted to, was able to participate in the process. The Public Advisory Committee (although disbanded in early 2001) maintained a structured link to the process that encouraged attention to public concerns. Yet these process components did not in the end ensure fully meaningful participation, largely due to the fact that the process was not as *representative* as it could have been.

The community was invited to present ideas and comment on draft documents and regular mailings sent to over 1700 community organizations, but key groups such as the Together Against Poverty Society, affordable housing organizations, regional stewardship groups, and others directly engaged in key sustainability initiatives were not specifically pursued for comment. An opportunity for the CRD to tap these valuable resources (and perhaps form partnerships) remains in the on-going development of the Housing Affordability, Economic Development, and Transportation Strategies. Grassroots expertise in these plans could prove critical to their success.

Even though the Regional Growth Strategy does not include any specific provisions intended to apply to other local governments and Aboriginal communities, they can affect and be affected by its objectives and actions. CRD staff sent written invitations to each First Nation inviting their involvement and met with First Nations representatives to encourage involvement. But only limited participation was achieved.

The process has not seemed *empowering* for most parties. Some municipalities fear that the Strategy will lead to loss of local power and are trying to retain their jurisdiction. At the same time, it is not clear that the Region will emerge from the exercise as a more powerful vehicle for ensuring that common regional interests receive due attention. For many citizen participants, perhaps it is too early to say whether involvement in the process has been a fulfilling and enriching experience that in retrospect increased their sense of capability and positive influence.

Many citizens with interests in growth management issues have been overwhelmed by the process and others may not have participated due to fears that their opinion would not matter. Early surveys showed public preference for the Walkable Centres option, with a majority of people in favour of slowing growth. Nonetheless, the option that was chosen followed the recommendations of the *Technical Analysis* completed by consultants, and stronger sustainability actions have not been considered. Still, there are some positive exceptions. For example, the broadly representative South Island Sustainable Communities Network made an evident difference in the Strategy's direction through a submission to the CRD endorsed by over 45 community organizations. Throughout the process, opportunities for learning about and understanding the complex issues surrounding sustainability in the region could have been enhanced through public education programs.

Finally, the process has been *open and transparent*, if also cumbersome because of bureaucratic procedure. The information needed for the effective participation of interested individuals has been available, though effort may be required to obtain it in some cases. All committee meetings and Board meetings are open to the public. Members of the public can comment on any item on the agenda if they register at least two days in advance and provide a written summary of their comments. Staff decisions are made known at Board meetings. Meeting agendas and staff recommendations are not available online beforehand, but can be obtained from the CRD by request. Board meeting times and agenda items have occasionally been changed, however, without public notice. Overall, the CRD staff and the Board have served well in their role as co-ordinator of the Regional Growth Strategy.

Requirements for Regional Growth Strategy Success

The CRD Regional Growth Strategy work has proceeded with an admirable set of sustainability-oriented principles and the participants have agreed on an attractive, if general, vision. This in itself represents a step forward, and insofar as it has continuing effects on public and political awareness of growth management issues and response options, the discussions and agreements to date will improve prospects for progress towards greater sustainability.

Educational efforts are likely to be crucial determinants of possible success in the implementation of the Strategy through municipal decisions. Although it is law-based, the process for strategy development and application is largely voluntary and consensual. Where understanding and commitment are weak, the potential effectiveness of a Strategy can be undermined easily. The participants can choose to agree only on a vaguely drafted set of agreeable principles that lack clear implications for action (as in the case of the Greater Vancouver Regional District's Livable Region Strategic Plan). Or, individual municipalities can defeat growth management goals through minimal compliance and incremental official community plan amendments allowing exceptions to growth constraints.

While there is broad support for growth management and quality of life protection in the CRD, the municipal government culture is problematic. Even in the more environmentally-focused municipalities, concerns about jurisdictional boundaries tend often to supersede commitment to co-ordination for regional goals. There is perhaps little fundamental difference between a municipality that favours sprawl despite the regional costs and a municipality that does not want any more "outside" people in "its" parks. Both fear that the Regional Board (composed of appointees from each municipality), or the province, will impose requirements for specific actions concerning land use, thus usurping their primary jurisdiction.

The consensus-based process is still moving forward and a common regional interest in effective growth management may yet prevail over the habitual attitudes in CRD municipalities. Nonetheless, retaining the intent of the Strategy throughout its implementation seems likely to require some changes in understanding and motivation. This could be encouraged by substantial expressions of provincial commitment to growth management, for example in the form of rules for infrastructure funding support that more clearly favour alternatives to sprawl and encourage innovative urban containment and revitalization projects.

The most agreeable possibility within the Region itself is probably further expansion of public and political awareness that sprawl is costly and that community-centred alternatives are practical and attractive. For this, two factors are likely to be especially significant. The first is the work of those community groups and citizens who have taken on the role of advocates for a more sustainable regional future. The contributions of the South Island Sustainable Communities Network and other such bodies have clearly been important in the process to date and may well be crucial in the more difficult stages ahead. Public and political understanding will also be enhanced by success of exemplary projects that demonstrate community enrichment through innovative redesign.

A related consideration is that the Regional Growth Strategy work in the CRD has been greatly strengthened by a wide range of complementary initiatives for sustainability. The most obvious example is development of the Green/Blue Spaces Strategy that was adopted as a background document for the Regional Growth Strategy. The Regional Cycling Strategy is another positive region-wide initiative that is beginning practical implementation by municipalities. But there have also been many more modest undertakings by committed community groups and neighbourhood associations that have worked to enliven community life, improve social equity, maintain heritage buildings, provide affordable housing, oppose further sprawl, rehabilitate degraded ecosystems and serve a host of other objectives. In doing so, they have contributed to substance of regional sustainability, but perhaps more valuably they have demonstrated the kind of farsighted collective action upon which community and ecological well-being depend.

CRD Regional Growth Strategy as a Model for Other Jurisdictions

On the surface the Regional Growth Strategy process is well conceived as a means of encouraging more sustainable land use planning and decision making in urban areas facing serious growth pressures. It offers a consensus-based approach in a province where more heavy-handed mechanisms are poorly received. It encourages attention to an admirably broad set of sustainability considerations. And the product document – the *Regional Growth Strategy* – has considerable apparent value as an illuminating overarching guide for community action, expressing the collective regional interest but retaining municipal authority in implementation. In areas where support for urban containment and quality of life protection is widely shared, as in the CRD, the process appears to have great potential.

In practice, too, the experience so far has been largely positive. The Region has proved at least somewhat responsive to public pressure for greater attention to sustainability considerations and has produced admirable documents on its vision, framework and alternatives. Nevertheless, even in the CRD where support for growth management is high, desires to protect local autonomy and to favour immediate interest over collective objectives remain strong and may seriously limit growth management effectiveness. If the Region's Growth Strategy process does not move municipal planning and decision making significantly in the direction of greater sustainability in the CRD, prospects for successful application in regions with less devotion to growth management are dim.

In the discussion below, we present some general lessons, positive and negative, derived from the experience of the Capital Regional District that may inform the concept, process and practice of planning for sustainability in other jurisdictions. The lessons are summarized in Box 8, below.

Lessons Learned

- **Work within a structure of legislative support and financing**

Having a solid legislative rationale and framework for developing the growth strategy, and supporting the process at many stages along the way, has been a critical factor in the CRD's achievements to date. The tools provided in the legislation – facilitation and arbitration for final by-law negotiations and official community plan Regional Context Statements and Implementation Agreements for strategy implementation – have been important and will likely continue to be crucial at the implementation stage.

As well, cost-sharing by the province has made the process possible. So far the province has contributed about \$1 million to the process. Even though the Planning Grant Program has now been reduced by 50 percent due to budget cuts, refocused funding support should continue through the implementation phase. As time goes on, the CRD and other regions will be expected to support themselves in growth management, but in initiating new planning perspectives and processes this provincial assistance has been extremely important.

- **Integrate concepts and specifics, control and flexibility**

A Regional Growth Strategy must manage the tricky task of integrating high level concepts and a vision general enough to be agreed to by all, with enough specifics to allow practical implementation. Exactly how this can best be done will depend on circumstances unique to each situation, but the CRD seems to have done a good job in this respect. This is likely due to the dynamic of interactions, checks and balances among the public, the municipalities and the CRD staff that placed the emphasis on the different aspects of vision, practicality and process at various times.

Another complex problem is the negotiation of an acceptable combination of regional control and municipal flexibility in planning decisions. We have seen that this is a very sensitive, and as yet unresolved, issue in the CRD. Despite the guidance provided by provincial legislation in defining regional and municipal roles, difficulties have arisen due to the historically ingrained strain between regional authority and municipal planning autonomy in British Columbia. It is this tension that creates the most uncertainty about the final outcome of the Regional Growth Strategy in this case.

- **Work with what is already there**

One of the strengths of the CRD strategy is that it makes logical sense, both in process and in form. The *Green/Blue Spaces Strategy* was adopted as a foundation document which prioritized the region's green infrastructure, protecting ecologically sensitive areas as well as marine areas and forest and agriculture reserves. Current

growth trends and plans were then analysed to see where it made the most sense to distribute new development and locate centres within the context of planning for efficient regional transportation. In this way, for example, the west shore communities will receive the majority of growth, as is consistent with their existing official community plans and ambitions.

Taking an inventory of existing conditions, including people's expectations and aspirations, helps in identifying opportunities that build on existing strengths (niche economic development like specialized agriculture, for example). Just as importantly, factors that undermine strategy goals, such as tax incentives that encourage sprawl, can be identified and changed.

- **Build stakeholder support from the beginning**

Having stakeholder support, or at least acceptance, in the early process stages is critical to its ultimate success and greatly increases time and resource efficiency. CRD officials first attempted to launch the process without political support from municipalities, and found themselves having to retrace their steps to establish the Official Community Plan Option and develop a project charter (*Framework for Our Future*) before they could proceed. Having a document that all decision makers sign initially is valuable as a reference point in keeping the process on track and moving forward. As is evident in the CRD, unresolved disagreements filter through to affect the outcome.

Public support is just as crucial. Residents must feel that their tax dollars are being used wisely and to their benefit. Apparently wasted time and money at the political level only creates mistrust and disillusion with the political process, and can result in cynicism rather than effective public engagement. In the CRD case, public engagement has been particularly important, because of the unusually strong and widespread public determination to protect an already high quality of life for most residents. In places where this foundation of public support for growth management is less well developed, more emphasis on early public deliberations and exploration of future options may be necessary.

- **Define visioning and consensus processes**

Planning for the future is obviously much easier and more efficient if you have some idea of where you want to go. Vision development that is participatory, representative, fair and realistic requires a systematic approach. That includes consideration of who will be invited to the process, to what extent input is to be sought from those who do not initially come forward, how to choose among conflicting views, and who is to make these decisions. Addressing these questions at the outset, recognizing the limited time and resources available, will minimize later delays and conflicts. Some participants in the Regional Growth Strategy exercise complained that the CRD visioning process resulting in *Foundations for Our Future* was too costly, but it has proven worthwhile as a reference point in keeping the process on track, prioritizing objectives, and providing an area of common ground as the basis of negotiations.

Similarly, the consensus decision process should be pre-defined. What constitutes a sufficient consensus? How are disagreements resolved? If all parties

must agree, does this mean planning outcomes will always be reduced to the lowest common denominator? This last concern remains to a certain extent in the CRD case due to the great range in municipal opinion on both the concept and content of regional planning. Some willingness to compromise or consider the regional vision above local interests must be present.

- **Encourage critical use of analytical tools**

Consultants to the CRD used a number of analytical tools in the Regional Growth Strategy planning process, including an Urban Capacity Inventory System for considering population and employment allocations, Emme/2 Regional Transportation Model for transportation impacts, and GIS for overlays and spatial analyses. These can be extremely useful in planning for growth management and sustainability. Tools that help generate possible alternatives and test various scenarios can be especially important aids for illuminating options, allowing politicians and citizens to see more clearly how a seemingly abstract vision (or a particular aspect of it) might unfold.

A word of caution is in order, however. The models chosen must respect system complexity and be able to integrate the relevant economic, social and ecological components if they are to provide plausible depictions of possible futures. The data that are input into these models must be appropriate, current and of high quality. It is often helpful to have good historical data to calibrate the models and test their accuracy. Perhaps most importantly, the assumptions used in building the models must be explicitly stated and reiterated whenever the results of modeling are presented.

- **Champion the cause**

Although it may not normally be on a list of practical planning procedures, having respected political champions to rally awareness and participation in the regional vision and management process can go a long way to ensuring its ultimate success. This is especially true where regional authority is limited and historically mistrusted, as in the case of the CRD. Debate over municipal and local interests often clouded the regional view. In addition, disputes tend to create a feeling of “us” and “them” between and amongst politicians, business and the public. Valuable championing was done by citizen participants in the CRD's process. More non-threatening voices advocating the broader perspective and attempting to find areas of common ground and mutual benefit, would have been helpful.

- **Engage the public**

Public input is much more than a legislative requirement in sustainability planning. Residents are owners of the regional vision, the *raison d'être* for the planning exercise and a valuable resource. Given the opportunity, many people in the CRD have been willing to involve themselves in the process and have kept the ultimate goals of sustainability and social well-being in the forefront. This is demonstrated not only by the many written and oral presentations at public forums on the Regional Growth Strategy, but also by involvement in a multitude of complementary initiatives and community groups. An important point, however, is that public participation

processes should maintain a high profile, be focused and be limited in time so that people do not lose interest.

Some suggest that, especially given budget restrictions, members of the public must play an integral role in the implementation and monitoring phase of the plan.²² Eliciting input from various community organizations and perspectives (e.g. youth, elderly, poor, disabled) would provide a wealth of information, ideas and resources for developing and implementing aspects of the Regional Growth Strategy and its associated strategies, such as the one on Housing Affordability. The critical factor, however, is that their participation must be empowering – participants must see their ideas given serious attention and action if merited. Public suggestions are often criticized by politicians and planning professionals as not feasible to implement. But rather than taking this as grounds for dismissing public contributions, growth management process leaders should recognize a need for further public discussions on the practicalities of implementation. The experience of the CRD Public Advisory Committee suggests that time and resources dedicated to the consultation and education even of a handful of citizens on planning details and implementation costs helps bridge the public-professional gap and strengthens the capacities of participants on both sides.

- **Support formal planning with complementary initiatives**

The CRD is an excellent example of parallel plans and community initiatives providing support to the formal growth management planning process.

The *Green/Blue Spaces Strategy* in particular has become an overarching guide for political and community action. Stewardship groups, land conservation organizations and most local governments view it as an exemplary model for the protection of new green and blue spaces in the region by setting out the priority areas which are addressed, often in a co-operative manner, as opportunities arise. The *Green/Blue Spaces Strategy* experience also suggests that when presented with a regional vision, individuals may be more likely to accept an impact in their own neighbourhood if they understand the overall benefit it will have for their quality of life.

As well, a diverse assortment of public participants, especially the members of South Island Sustainable Communities Network, have played a significant positive role in the CRD process as advocates of sustainability and as links between the regional process and local citizens. A similar diversity of complementary initiatives has also strengthened the substance and credibility of the process.

- **When the going gets tough, keep going**

Achieving consensus in the CRD has not been easy. This situation is partly due to the historical tension between levels of government. It also reflects the wide range of perspectives and opinions held in the region, and the complexity and depth of issues that touch each resident personally. Even if common goals are agreed upon, there is considerable debate about how to get there. There are competing priorities, many

²² For example, the Community Planning Council has volunteered to be a partner in working toward the goals of the RGS.

possible approaches to resolving matters of controversy, and wide variations in the depth of public and political understanding of different issues and options.

Nonetheless, simply having regional discussions on sustainability issues is a substantial beginning. Participants are made aware of various perspectives, gain understanding and find common ground. The dialogue can build respect and trust, and gradually foster willingness to compromise in some areas to achieve goals that benefit everyone.

Experience in other areas (e.g., Greater Vancouver Regional District) has shown that, even though there may be a great deal of uncertainty and some trepidation in the initial phases of growth strategy planning, a shift occurs during the implementation stage. What seemed an abstract exercise comes to life as municipalities, commercial interests and the public begin to work together of necessity and implement specific actions. As time goes on, the costs of sprawl and the benefits of regional planning and growth management become more apparent.

- **Focus on integration**

Sustainability involves the integrated and optimal development of interrelated ecological, economic and social components in both the short and the long term. While it is true that trade-offs will always have to be made, creative planning can often yield designs and actions that are mutually enhancing. An obvious example in the CRD is eco-tourism, where careful preservation of the unique and beautiful natural surroundings will continue to attract visitors and their tourist dollars for years to come. Planning a lower impact and efficient public and alternative transportation system will combat rising pollution and reduce resource consumption. Complete communities with connecting trails and bike lanes encourage healthy lifestyles. Density can be accommodated by attractive low-rise buildings that are accessible to the elderly and disabled, and affordable to low income earners.

The key is in applying sustainable and ecological principles throughout the development process. More radical green design techniques and technologies are now gaining more acceptance in private and commercial development. The emerging field of industrial ecology, which has adopted the principle that in nature there is no waste, uses the outputs from one industry/process as the input to another. Concepts such as these can enormously improve our ability to meet goals of healthy and sustainable communities.

- **Prepare for evolutionary implementation**

Several planners in the CRD have noted that the *Regional Growth Strategy By-law* is only a point of departure. Implementation will take many years, and never end. The complementary Housing Affordability, Economic Development and Transportation strategies have yet to be developed and integrated. Improvements to the plan can be made with each comprehensive review. New councils, community groups and municipal politicians will each bring something new to the table. In this way, implementation of the plan will unfold.

The concept of evolutionary implementation can also be deliberately applied in the design stage. A good example of this concept is the development of public transportation in the Regional Growth Strategy. The context for an efficient system

is set using the planning tools of land use zoning and an urban containment boundary to create density around transportation nodes and corridors. These actions should build a sufficient density of potential transit users to permit introduction of express bus service. As other measures are put in place (such as public transit right-of-ways) and as density increases, ridership numbers may grow enough to justify a light rail system. Thus, instead of first choosing the technology with a large financial outlay, the appropriate type of transportation system is allowed to evolve. Many other such creative designs are possible.

- **Incorporate targets, indicators and monitoring design in the planning process**

The CRD Regional Growth Strategy has included performance targets that are reasonable in substance and number, although they are still subject to adjustment as more information becomes available. Too many targets incorporated in a growth strategy can bog it down in detail and discourage creative planning solutions. Too few and insubstantial targets limit guidance and incentive. This is a problem for preservation of environmentally sensitive areas under the CRD strategy. All targets and timelines for acquisition and protection of these lands were removed in municipal negotiations in an effort to achieve consensus. Many observers now fear that these lands will not receive the attention or protection that was intended by the Regional Growth Strategy and that is required to maintain integrity.

Monitoring is another weak area in the CRD strategy process. The design of the monitoring program has been left to the implementation phase. This is undesirable for two reasons. First, the required resources (in people and money) may not be available at the end of a long process. Monitoring is too critical a component to be inadequately or hastily developed. Second, monitoring and management inform each other. A monitoring program should be designed in conjunction with the creation of the management plan and evolve along with it. Goals must be measurable and the information from indicators used to shape and evaluate progress toward them. Research into required baseline information should already be done and data on changes collected as soon as it is apparent the plan will go forward.

Integrated monitoring also allows interim and process indicators to be set (e.g. public participation rates, document review times, etc.). The relevant findings can inform adaptation of the process as it moves along. It may seem more costly to approach monitoring design in this way, but time and money will be saved in process efficiency, and the monitoring of strategy goals can begin immediately with the implementation phase.

- **Develop a culture of sustainability**

In some respects, the CRD seems to have a culture focussed more on achieving and retaining a high quality of life than on sustainability. This distinction could explain the apparent dichotomy in an individual who supports growth management and environmental protection, but still wants to own a single-family home and drive an SUV. While necessary and admirable, protecting the environment and adopting a green perspective do not cover the full range of sustainability concerns. Sustainability requires integration of social, economic and ecological considerations, and depends to a large degree on understanding the interrelationships among them.

One criticism of the CRD Regional Growth Strategy is that it does not address social issues well enough. Not everyone in the CRD has a high quality of life and the plan does little beyond the Housing Affordability Strategy to deal with these problems. It is difficult to buy into the long-term benefit of the region when one is constantly preoccupied with getting enough food to eat. The CRD could also do more to reduce overall resource consumption and pollution emissions. Even though the CRD's ecological footprint may be smaller than that of some other regions of British Columbia and Canada, it remains much larger than can be sustained equitably on this planet.

It is reasonable to assume that new perspectives take time to become part of everyday life, as did seat belts and recycling in the past, and the regional debate of sustainability issues likely helped greatly in this regard. It is important, however, to make public education an explicit part of planning for sustainability.

- **Incorporate sustainability in planning instead of merely planning for sustainability**

As long as conventional planning and management philosophies and methods are utilized, sustainability will remain elusive. Sustainability is much more than an objective; it is a way of re-organizing human-ecological relationships for long and short term gains. This involves building understanding and capacity today as much as it involves working towards future objectives.

Exactly what new organizations and practices under principles of sustainability might look like is currently the subject of much research and thought. No doubt the answers will vary from place to place. But all must include political structures that are flexible enough to address important issues or goals at the appropriate scale and that foster willing engagement by citizens as well as public authorities.

Much of the difficulty in the CRD growth strategy process has arisen because there is no clear level of government (or established working relationship between levels of government) at the scale of obviously regional issues, such as transportation, resource use and air pollution. Part of the answer to this problem will have to involve clarification of what planning issues and authority are best located at the municipal, regional and provincial levels. But in practice most issues affect interests at all levels from the individual on up. For that reason, broadly shared understanding, consultation and mutual co-operation will be necessary even where the allocation of prime responsibility is clear.

Moreover, sustainability oriented planning must appreciate the interactions among factors and the limited predictability of outcomes in complex systems. Planning must therefore be iterative, and rely on careful monitoring by the range of affected interests as well as by designated authorities. Rather than requiring a public consultation component in planning, decision-making in the context of sustainability would routinely include the public (both individuals and community groups). Learning and adaptation should be explicitly incorporated into decision-making and policy as a means of dealing with irreducible uncertainty and risk. More simply, we must all accept a changing world and work with it, rather than attempting to control or resist.

Box 8: Lessons Learned from the CRD Regional Growth Strategy Initiative

- Work within a structure of legislative support and financing
- Integrate concepts and specifics, control and flexibility
- Work with what is already there
- Build stakeholder support from the beginning
- Define visioning and consensus processes
- Encourage critical use of analytical tools
- Champion the cause
- Engage the public
- Support formal planning with complementary initiatives
- When the going gets tough, keep going
- Focus on integration
- Prepare for evolutionary implementation
- Incorporate targets, indicators and monitoring design in the planning process
- Develop a culture of sustainability
- Incorporate sustainability in planning instead of merely planning for sustainability

Growth management process issues

The growth management strategy process established in British Columbia is consensus-based and co-operative. The law provides useful guiding principles and processes. Provincial authorities are given plenty of tools for encouraging participation in strategy development and facilitating conflict resolution, and could probably use provincial funding decisions as effective levers when necessary. But the framework emphasizes voluntarism in strategy development and implementation design. Regional authorities are given little autonomous power and the constituent municipalities are required to do very little.

This approach has advantages and disadvantages. It respects the traditional municipal hostility to regional imposition and the importance of municipal level willingness if implementation is to be effective. It may also encourage more direct citizen engagement in growth management issues at the local level. At the same time, it relies heavily on the enlightenment and voluntary collectivism of municipal authorities, who are electorally accountable only to local residents, and whose immediate local interests may conflict with the pursuit of broadly shared objectives.

Despite the CRD's unusual advantage of widely shared public support for growth management, the Regional Growth Strategy initiative revealed basic tensions about how to move ahead. Municipalities that are already built-out and devoted to preserving their existing quality of life have viewed the limiting aspects of growth management more positively than municipalities that are willing and able to welcome new businesses and additional residents. Comfortably established neighbourhoods have been less inclined to embrace densification than neighbourhoods with derelict lands and associated

redevelopment opportunities. Sustainability-minded individuals and residential groups that have pushed for more comprehensive growth-management measures found that many fellow citizens had not yet made the necessary connections between a healthy environment, society, economy and were not yet ready to adjust their own lifestyles. In the context of such diversity, consensus seeking tended to favour a watering down of provisions in the interests of achieving “a CRD that everyone can live with.”²³ But it was also a broadly educational exercise for municipal authorities and local residents and with the watering down of provisions came at least some strengthening of the collective understanding that will be necessary for implementation.

Probably the participative and educational benefits of strategy development could have been greater. Public engagement in the process was sometimes frustrated, despite reasonable efforts by CRD staff. Consistent public attention was undermined by long delays for municipal review during which many residents lost interest. The sheer volume and complexity of material permitted only a dedicated few with abundant time to follow the process and participate in it fully. Involvement of neighbouring jurisdictions and First Nations within the CRD was also disappointing. Despite these shortcomings, many individuals and community groups made important contributions and lent credibility both to the process and to sustainability ideals. Broad public engagement and awareness of growth management benefits are clearly important in such processes. Lacking the public support and commitment evident in the CRD, growth strategy efforts have been highly disappointing in the Okanagan-Shuswap region of the British Columbia interior even though the area is, at least by some measures, more desperately in need of capable growth management planning.²⁴

Even if a strong Regional Growth Strategy had been quickly and voluntarily adopted in the CRD, effective growth management results would not have been assured since so much depends on strategy implementation. In the British Columbia process, implementation must be accomplished chiefly through incorporation of growth strategy components in Official Community Plans and associated policy documents, applied in multitudes of specific decisions. Once the Regional Growth Strategy is in place, the member municipalities are required to adjust their Official Community Plans to comply. But Official Community Plans are easily amended and, over time, as the region's finite urban land base decreases, temptations to stray from sustainability and growth management principles will increase.

The evident challenges are illustrated by the unwillingness of two municipalities to accept the Regional Growth Strategy that they played a role in developing over the better part of a decade. Despite extended efforts to reach a negotiated agreement on the growth management by-law, Sidney and North Saanich remain non-signatories. While the

²³ One example of diluting the document occurred just before it was written into a by-law. All numerical targets for protection of ecologically-valuable lands were removed to achieve consensus. *By-law 2952* now states that these lands will be protected “as much as possible...”.

²⁴ The Central Okanagan District's Regional Growth Strategy, adopted in 2000 was found to be weak in a sustainability-based assessment by Ellis (2000), who also considered two other growth management efforts in the Okanagan-Shuswap region. The Okanagan-Similkameen Regional District considered growth management issues in the late 1990s, decided against growth strategy work in 2000, began again in 2001 and may now be moving ahead. The North Okanagan Regional District has chosen not to develop a growth management strategy. See <http://www.mcaaws.gov.bc.ca/lgd/irpd/growth/ovalley.html#rdos>.

province is empowered and expected to impose mediation or arbitration at this point and ensure that a Regional Growth Strategy is in place, the political delicacies remain and the province may well be hesitant to act ways that seem to impose obligations on the recalcitrant municipalities.

Given the complexities of growth management, and the record of conflict over local and regional planning matters in British Columbia, such difficulties are to be expected. Opening lines of communication and debate at a regional level is, in itself, a significant step forward in a province historically entrenched in highly fragmented and often very weak land use planning at the municipal level.

Larger Planning Issues

The CRD process for regional growth management has also exposed larger issues that are central questions of philosophy and practice in attempts to incorporate sustainability considerations into planning:

- **Regional growth management must overcome the limitations of municipal autonomy.**

The CRD case confirms that even with unusually strong public support, effective growth management is extremely difficult where traditions of municipal autonomy are deeply entrenched. After seven years of deliberation in the CRD, regional co-operation remains difficult. Some municipalities are unwilling to accept dictates from higher levels of government. Others are wary of costs associated with regional commitments or fear uneven distribution of benefits. In addition, as a body comprised of appointed municipal members seeking consensus on regional issues, the CRD has limited popular and political authority to provide clear direction and enforce its decisions. As a result it is not obvious who should decide what the regional interest is, and whose opinion should prevail.

The CRD's considerable accomplishments so far have depended on four factors that mitigated the municipal autonomy problem. First, provincial legislation provided principles and guidelines within which to work, funding support, and process facilitation by a provincial appointee to encourage negotiations to continue when agreement seemed unlikely. Second, the fact that the limited and vulnerable land base was already showing signs of strain and degradation made the need for wise growth management more evident. Third, most people in the region have chosen to live there because of the beautiful natural surroundings, recreational opportunities and social benefits, and there is widespread understanding that evident growth pressures jeopardize this high quality of life. Finally, because people care about the environment and their communities, the Regional Growth Strategy process was not only accompanied by public support but also strengthened by it. At every opportunity, interested citizens called for more ambitious growth management and sustainability efforts.

The combination of these factors was crucial. Elsewhere in British Columbia, with the same legal framework but different local conditions, growth management efforts have failed. In cases where municipal autonomy is similarly strong and public

support weaker (for example, in the Okanagan-Shuswap case mentioned above), the prospects for effective growth management and sustainability planning are dim at best. Certainly the current provincial law has not established a sufficient base for strong growth management planning. It is designed to encourage and facilitate consensus, not to give new powers to regional scale authority.

The solution is unlikely to be a simple campaign to assert regional authority over municipal planning, though for the basics of growth management planning, some regional empowerment appears to be needed. Effective regional growth management requires, at minimum, planning that ensures transit friendly development, firm maintenance of an urban containment boundary, provision of affordable housing and other equity measures, and creation of a coherent ecological and resource area protection system. Means of accomplishing this include enhanced incentives for municipal co-operation as well as additional powers at the regional level. But these are unlikely to be sufficient by themselves. The CRD case suggests that a strong foundation for effective growth management also relies on carefully nurtured public understanding and commitment – a force unlikely to be assisted by approaches characterized by central imposition.

Understanding and commitment grew through the CRD deliberations and may be expected to do so elsewhere. Growth management is, however, unavoidably complex. It involves the full range of intersecting sustainability issues as well as the intricacies of competing interests. Better means of clarifying the implications of choices will always be useful. One powerful example was the initial CRD exercise of extrapolating from the current municipal plans to give politicians and residents a clear, and for many shocking, vision of what continuation along the established path would bring. Similarly valuable would be better means of depicting the regional implications of local actions – for example, the regional costs imposed by municipal approval of a big box development that promises substantial local gains. While future scenario building and full cost accounting also involve daunting complexities, such tools are in some form necessary to help citizens and decision makers weigh the options before them.

- **Municipal authorities and planning professionals must help build public effectiveness in sustainability planning**

A long-standing debate is the extent to which it is possible, desirable and practical to engage the public in planning processes. The continuum can range from authorities and professionals taking the lead role and complying with a minimum of legislated public consultation, to planners merely facilitating a process largely directed and decided by an educated and involved citizenry. In sustainability planning, the benevolence of a regulatory authority is not sufficient; the public must participate in and influence the process. Members of the community are owners of the regional vision, the *raison d'être* for the planning exercise and a valuable resource.

In the case of the CRD, individual citizens and public interest organizations played a key role in the process, especially in keeping the ultimate goals of sustainability and social well-being in the forefront. Some planning professionals dismissed many of the ideas offered by citizens as impractically idealistic because they neglected established planning mechanisms and economic implications, or

unhelpfully self-interested because they seemed to focus on "not-in-my-backyard" concerns. Given the evident importance of public engagement in growth management planning, a better approach would be to use participative processes to deepen the understanding of local citizens who are willing to devote their time to the cause.

Concern over a particular issue can draw them into the sustainability planning discussion with at least two outcomes. First, their ideas can be tempered and enriched by further experience in planning activities, eventually becoming realistic and thoughtful contributions. Second, continued involvement in planning issues can foster a sense of civic responsibility, with a broader understanding of the regional perspective and the interrelationships of social, ecological and economic factors. In these ideal circumstances, the public becomes a well-informed as well as practically indispensable part of visioning, decision making and implementation in the sustainability planning process.

- **Sustainability goes beyond preserving quality of life**

A powerful factor in the CRD growth management case has been CRD residents' recognition that they enjoy a high quality of life, and must act to preserve it. On the face of it, this perspective is a praiseworthy foundation of strong public support for slower growth and sustainability planning. However, it can also reflect the protectionist biases of the advantaged, whose concerns may not extend far beyond local biophysical and community conditions and who may scarcely recognize the cumulative impacts of lifestyle on the broader ecology and the rest of society. Personal action may be limited to what is convenient. Some who have campaigned to protect a high quality of life in the CRD have seemed to demand the best of both worlds – for example, the ability to live rurally in a single-family home and have private automobile access to urban amenities without facing the actual costs that low density and automobile use imposes on the region (or the biosphere) as a whole.

Such inconsistencies are exacerbated by limited appreciation of the interdependencies of the economic, social and ecological aspects of sustainability, locally and beyond. Integrating local and global perspectives and impacts is a critical factor in moving from local protectionism to sustainability planning. Part of the challenge of growth management is to help people to grasp these connections, to consider cumulative effects, and to see some of the links between their daily actions and the long-term durability of a valued quality of life. In this, regional scale effects are just part of the story, since regions too affect and are affected by sustainability prospects at a larger scale. Attention to relations between regional growth and global conditions, for example through use of ecological footprint calculations (Wackernagel and Rees, 1996), should be a regular component of regional growth management initiatives.

Concluding Comments

Growth management used to mean planning to ensure more efficient accommodation of urban expansion. Today in places such as the Capital Regional District of British Columbia it is undertaken with at least some recognition that the land available is

ultimately limited – there is only so much space and unless a good deal of the remaining non-urbanized land is left as field or forest, quality of life will decline. We are just beginning to grapple with the implications of growth management of the latter kind.

It is hardly surprising that the early efforts have proved challenging. The CRD case, so far at least, has been relatively cheerful. Despite a tradition of municipal independence, and the essentially voluntary nature of the undertaking, the region's local authorities have reached near agreement on an admirable first set of growth management strategy components. Conflict resolution mechanisms are in place to deal with the remaining disagreements. And while there are likely to be disappointments as well as successes in implementation, the gradual process of deliberation and decision has helped to build new lines for inter-municipal communication and co-operation as well as new public understandings and expectations that will discourage backsliding. The Regional Growth Strategy document does not represent an ideal plan for progress toward sustainability, but it is a good beginning.

The results will only become evident over time. Taken as a whole, the municipalities and citizens in the region display a complex mixture of attitudes and actions that both contribute to and detract from prospects for a more sustainable future. Although there is reason to be hopeful, it is not clear whether and how application of an enlightened regional vision will emerge through the fog of narrow interest.

No one expects a smooth road to sustainability through growth management. The CRD case also suggests that no one should expect success through simple mechanisms. The significant if limited progress in the CRD has depended on a combination of factors including legal obligations and facilitating mechanisms, provincial funding support, evident physical limits, widespread public commitment resting on a generally high current quality of life, the foresight and determination of active citizens and public interest groups, the willingness of municipalities to continue working for resolutions despite difficulties, and the conscientious work of the CRD staff. Reliance on any subset of these factors would have been insufficient. Further progress in the future is likely to be no less dependent on a broad mix of participants, mechanisms and initiatives.

The potential package of supporting factors for growth management will inevitably vary from case to case. In some ways, no doubt, the CRD example is unique. The experience in the CRD has provided a valuable service in presenting an example and offering lessons that can be considered in growth management and sustainability planning efforts elsewhere. But the key probably is to recognize the wide range of possibly positive contributions and to see the many challenges and complexities of growth management as a rich source of complementary tools for promoting greater understanding, deeper collective commitment and more sustainable futures.

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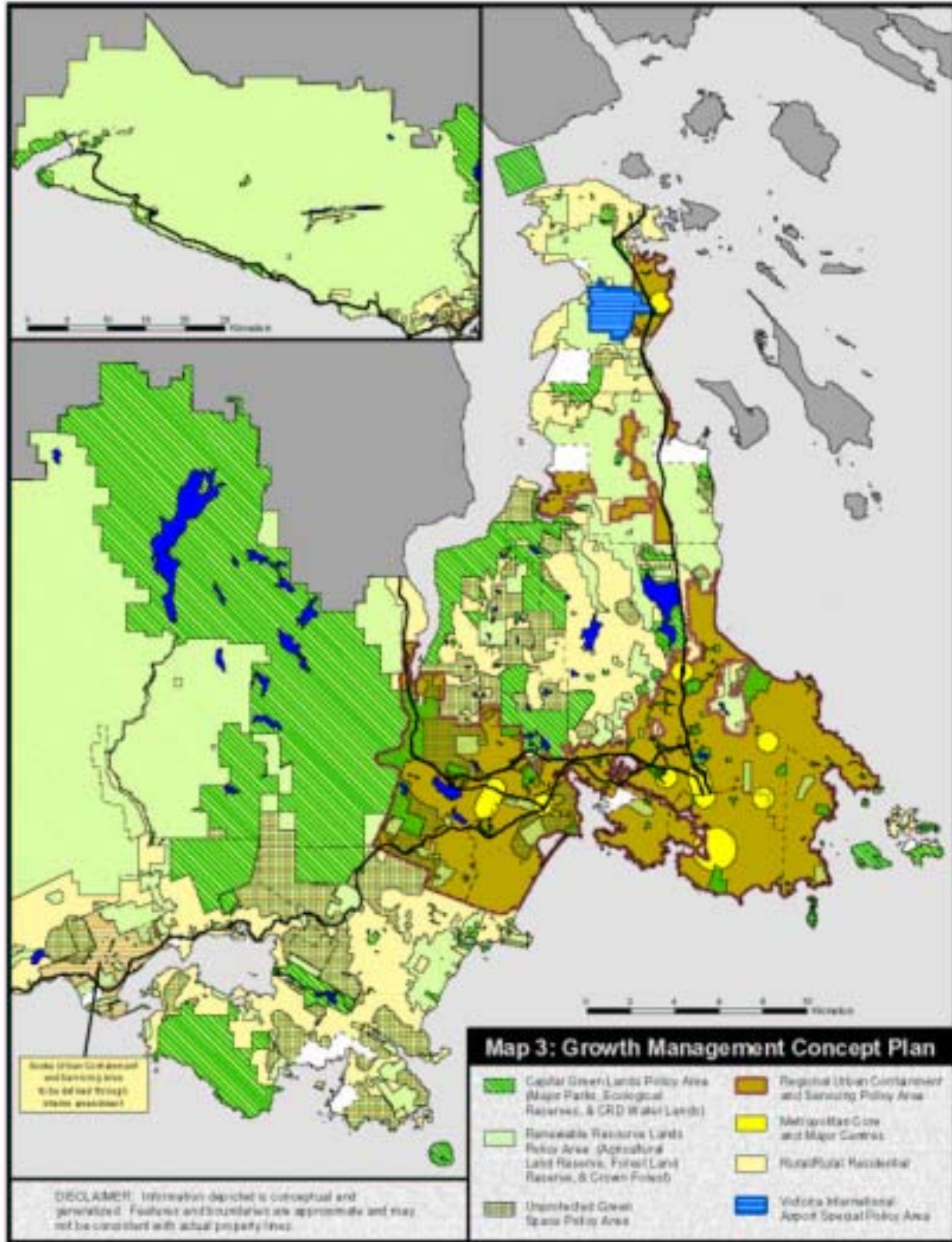
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APPENDIX A

Draft Regional Growth Strategy Growth Management Concept Plan



Source: <http://crd.bc.ca/regplan/RGS/Reports/draftrgs.htm>

APPENDIX B

Regional Growth Strategy Evaluation Criteria

The following evaluation criteria were approved in principle by the CRD Board on September 30, 1998 and used as reference points in the *Technical Analysis and Assessment* of the four Growth Strategy Alternatives (CitySpaces *et al.*, 2000).

Liveable Human Settlement	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. The character of the Region, and each community's unique identity, character and role in the Region is recognized and preserved.2. Supplies of suitable land, infrastructure and resources are provided to accommodate preferred future settlement.3. Transportation infrastructure for all modes adequately and safely serves the region.4. The economy is strong and diverse.5. Economic development activities support a wide range of business opportunities in existing sectors and develop new ones consistent with the regional vision.6. A wide range of employment opportunities are available for regional residents.7. Employment centres as identified in the Regional Vision are supported.8. The arts and cultural and sports community are supported as a significant contributor to the local economy.
Enhanced Quality of Life	<ol style="list-style-type: none">9. The completeness of the Region's communities is enhanced.10. Community health and stability is maintained and enhanced.11. Housing is available to meet the needs of residents.
Environment and Resource Stewardship	<ol style="list-style-type: none">12. Core green and blue space areas are protected and maintained.13. Risks to life and property associated with natural hazards are minimized.14. The quality and quantity of water resources are protected.15. Renewable and non-renewable natural resources are conserved and stewarded.16. Air, land and water pollution is reduced and remediated.
Implementation Principles	

17. Implementation of the Regional Growth Strategy alternative is affordable to the public and all affected levels of government.
18. The implementation of the Regional Growth Strategy alternative is practical within the time horizon identified.

APPENDIX C

Summary of Proposed Regional Growth Strategy Targets by Priority Area and Strategic Initiative

Priority Area	Strategic Initiative	Target
1. Managing and Balancing Growth	1.1 Keep Urban Settlement Compact	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) By 2011, increase the designated supply of detached and ground access housing within the Urban Containment and Servicing Area in Victoria, Esquimalt, Saanich and Oak Bay, by 5% over designated capacities at the date of adoption of the Regional Growth Strategy. 2) Accommodate a minimum of 15% of the region's cumulative new dwelling units within the City of Victoria to 2026 following adoption of the Regional Growth Strategy (<i>30% of the region's total dwelling stock was located within the City of Victoria in 1996</i>). 3) Accommodate a minimum of 90% of the region's cumulative new dwelling units within the Regional Urban Containment and Servicing Area to 2026 following adoption of the Regional Growth Strategy (<i>just under 90% of the region's total dwelling stock was located within the RUCS Area in 1996</i>).
	1.2 Protect the Integrity of Rural Communities	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) By 2026, do not exceed designated official community plan development capacity limits determined at the date of adoption of the Regional Growth Strategy in rural and rural residential areas.
2. Environment and Resources	2.1 Protect Regional Green and Blue Space	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) By 2011, achieve protection of a minimum of 100% of the proposed Sea to Sea Green/Blue Belt (<i>approximately 75% was protected as of March 2001</i>). 2) By 2016, achieve protection of a minimum of 100% of the Regional Trail Network (<i>approximately 46% was completed by the end of 2001</i>).

	2.2 Manage Natural Resources and the Environment Sustainably	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Targets for physical and environmental services to be established through a best management practices implementation agreement within 2 years of the adoption of the Regional Growth Strategy. – Targets for improved air quality to be established in part through the Regional Transportation Strategy within 2 years of the adoption of the Regional Growth Strategy, and through the Regional Growth Strategy monitoring program.
3. Housing and Social Well-Being	3.1 Build Complete Communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Municipal targets to be established through desired development guidelines for individual official community plans through Regional Context Statements, within 2 years of the adoption of the Regional Growth Strategy.
	3.2 Improve Housing Affordability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Targets to be established in the Regional Housing Affordability Strategy.

4. Transportation	4.1 Increase Transportation Choice	<p>Mode Share Targets for PM Peak Period Trips:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) By 2026, achieve a minimum PM peak period region-wide transit mode share of 10% (<i>4.6% in 1996</i>); 2) By 2026, achieve a minimum PM peak period mode share by non-auto modes of 40% for trips to, from and within the Metropolitan Core (<i>31% for trips by non-auto modes to/from the Victoria Central Business District, a proxy of the Metropolitan Core, in 1996</i>); <p>Mode Share Targets for Journey-to-Work Trips:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3) By 2026, achieve a minimum region-wide transit mode share of 15% for journey-to-work trips (<i>9.9% in 1996</i>);. 4) By 2026, achieve a minimum cycling mode share of 10% within the Victoria Census Metropolitan Area for journey-to-work trips (<i>4.9% in 1996</i>); and 15% for journey-to-work trips for residents of the combined areas of the City of Victoria, Oak Bay, Esquimalt, and urban Saanich (<i>6.2% in 1996</i>); <p>Mode Share Targets for Annual Travel:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Other transportation targets to be established through the Regional Transportation Strategy within 2 years of the adoption of the Regional Growth Strategy.
5. Economic Development	5.1 Strengthen the Regional Economy	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Accommodate a minimum of 20% of the region’s cumulative employment growth within the City of Victoria to 2026 following adoption of the Regional Growth Strategy (<i>approximately 49% of the region’s total employment was located within the City of Victoria in 1996</i>);. 2) By 2026, achieve a minimum jobs/population ratio in the urban Western Communities of 0.35 (<i>0.27 in 1996</i>); <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Other economic targets to be established through the Regional Economic Development Strategy within 2 years of the adoption of the Regional Growth Strategy.

Source: CRD, February 2002: Appendix

Metropolitan Core and Major Centre Performance Guidelines

Guideline	Metro Core – Central Area	Metro Core – Secondary Area	Major Centres
Dimensions	1000 metre radius (20 minute walk) from the intersection of Douglas Street and View Street.	Area bounded by: <i>South</i> – Simcoe/ Ontario/ May Streets; <i>East</i> – Linden/ Chambers Streets; <i>North</i> – Bay Street; <i>West</i> – Bay/ Catherine Streets.	Approximately 500 metre radius (10 minute walk) from central point. Note: The Langford and Upper Douglas St. Centres are equal to two adjacent centres in dimensions.
Area (hectares)	276 ha.	269 ha.	75 – 80 ha.
Average Gross Density (dwelling units/ha.)	100 – 120 units/ha.	60 – 90 units/ha.	80 – 100 units/ha.
Function/ Mix of Uses	Complex mix of residential and employment uses serving a largely regional market. Dwelling mix predominantly is apartments with townhouses and other attached ground oriented units making up a small portion of the total.	Mixed use area dominated by residential uses, of which approximately half are apartments and the balance other ground oriented units, and single detached and duplex houses.	Mix of residential and employment uses serving primarily a sub-regional market. Dwelling mix is dominated by apartments, with the remainder other ground oriented units, and single detached and duplex units.

Trans- portation	Primary regional public transit exchange with strong express bus connections to major centres and regional points of entry. “Fare-less square” free transit service during business day. Excellent pedestrian, cycling facilities.	Excellent local transit connections to express routes and excellent pedestrian, cycling facilities.	Direct centre to centre express bus service. Excellent pedestrian, cycling and local transit connections.
Public Open Space	Target up to 10% publicly accessible open space comprised of parks, public squares, playgrounds and enhanced streetscapes.	Target up to 10% publicly accessible open space comprised of parks, public squares, playgrounds and enhanced streetscapes.	Target up to 10% publicly accessible open space comprised of parks, public squares, playgrounds and enhanced streetscapes.

Source: CRD, February 2002: Appendix