The Compact Metropolis: Growth Management and Intensification in Vancouver, Toronto, and Montreal

Ray Tomalty

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Foreword

On behalf of the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) and the Intergovernmental Committee on Urban and Regional Research (ICURR), we are pleased to present Dr. Tomalty's report entitled *The Compact Metropolis: Growth Management and Intensification in Vancouver, Toronto and Montreal.* ICURR previously published a descriptive survey that discussed the quantitative growth patterns of the six largest urban areas in Canada: Halifax, Montreal, Toronto, Winnipeg, Calgary and Vancouver. The study was carried out by a team from the Université de Montréal, comprising Dr. Chris Bryant and Denis Lemire. The study entitled *Population Distribution and the Management of Urban Growth in Six Selected Urban Regions of Canada*, also identified the most pressing growth issues as perceived by senior planners in the regions.

With the publication of Dr. Tomalty's report, ICURR has turned its attention to an in-depth analysis of growth management policies at the provincial, metropolitan and municipal levels in Canada's three major cities: Vancouver, Toronto and Montréal. In doing so, it enlisted the financial help of the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation which has long fostered the "compact city" concept through its publications. CMHC and ICURR asked Dr. Tomalty to identify, for each of the study areas, the full range of government agencies that have adopted growth management and intensification policies, the degree to which these policies are linked or consistent, challenges to growth management and intensification and, as a final step, to determine whether policies are likely to promote the compact city concept. It is the hope of CMHC and ICURR that planners from all Canadian cities will benefit from this comparative discussion of recent efforts in growth management and housing intensification.

ICURR wishes to thank the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation for its help in enabling us to successfully complete this comprehensive study. Our thanks are also extended to Ray Tomalty for pursuing this complex research issue with enthusiasm and tenacity.

André Lanteigne
Executive Director

Dr. Claude Marchand
Research Director

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Author's Biography

Ray Tomalty is a research consultant and academic with an interest in urban development and environmental impacts. He has published reports and articles on residential intensification, growth management, sustainable urban development, and ecosystem planning as applied to urban regions. He currently holds a research fellowship at Queen's University where he is investigating the link between municipal financial instruments, land use patterns and environmental impacts. In addition, he teaches in the Environmental Studies program at Innis College, the University of Toronto, and he is associate editor of Alternatives, Canada's oldest environmental journal. He recently completed his Ph.D. in Regional Planning and Resource Development at the University of Waterloo.

Executive Summary

Over the last few years, the notion of the compact city has emerged as a key theme in professional planning practice and the academic planning literature. The advocates of compact urban development claim that by planning more compact urban regions and suburban communities, agricultural land can be preserved, the impact of urbanization on the environment can be reduced, more socially inclusive and vibrant communities can be created, and the fiscal costs associated with growth can be minimized.

Thus, in many metropolitan regions throughout North America, state, provincial and regional governments have undertaken comprehensive policy initiatives to control sprawl, direct growth into regional cores and suburban centres, and to achieve a greater range and density of housing in suburban developments. A review of the advantages and disadvantages of residential intensification reveals that many of the benefits accrue to the regional or even global levels while many of the costs are felt by local municipalities. Thus, it is not surprising that many of these policy initiatives have met and are meeting with mixed success, in part due to the resistance of municipalities to planning directives coming from "above".

The dynamics between various levels of government are the focus of the present report. This report explores growth management and intensification policy issues in the three largest metropolitan regions in Canada using a case study approach. Each case study attempts to:

- identify the full range of government agencies at the provincial, regional, and local levels that have adopted policies to promote growth management or housing intensification and to survey those policies
- determine the degree to which such policies are linked between the various levels of government so that a picture of the policy dynamics of growth management and intensification in each region emerges
- relate growth management and intensification policies to the policy context, i.e., the important ideas, institutions and interests in each region
- assess whether individual policies and the policy framework taken as a whole are likely to be effective in promoting growth management and intensification.

The case study approach allows in-depth investigation of intensification efforts in a particular locale and assesses how various government agencies that are promoting or responsible for implementing intensification policies interact. Typical of case studies, this report uses a wide array of information sources to construct each case. Four principal sources of information were used: interviews with representatives of government agencies, stakeholder groups, and developers; newspaper articles from a major daily in each of the

case study regions; primary literature including government planning and policy documents, and stakeholder documents; secondary literature on growth management, regional planning, urban policy, intensification, and housing policy, and; results from an earlier survey of municipal officials on the topic of intensification carried out by Engin Isin and Ray Tomalty for CMHC.

The three case studies presented in this report follow a common format:

- The current jurisdictional framework including municipal and regional government institutions.
- Growth patterns, including population growth and spatial distribution across the region, housing characteristics, and density patterns.
- Growth-related issues are identified, covering economic, environmental, social and fiscal issues.
- Provincial, regional, and local policy and planning frameworks governing growth management and intensification are surveyed. A key issue that is considered is the degree to which different planning levels are linked or consistent in their planning efforts.
- Emerging policy initiatives and challenges to growth management and intensification are identified.
- Conclusions are drawn concerning the effectiveness of provincial growth management and intensification policies, metropolitan, and municipal planning.

Summary of Findings

The case studies revealed that the issues encountered across the three urban regions were similar: economic, fiscal, environmental, and social concerns were evident in each urban region. However, significant variations among the regions were also detectable in terms of the priority afforded the various issues. In the Vancouver region, environmental issues such as air pollution, energy use, and the consumption of agricultural land were of very high priority, as were concerns about land and housing supply and affordability. In contrast, these issues were not in the foreground in Montreal. There, fiscal issues and regional economic development were paramount in thinking about growth management and controlling sprawl, i.e., developing the infrastructure that is required to increase the efficiency of the urban system, finding an equitable formula for sharing the costs of regional services and infrastructure, and engendering a regional identity as a location for outside investment. The Toronto region has moved between these two issue contexts, from housing supply and affordability and environment issues in the late 1980s to economic development, sharing the fiscal burden, and concerns over core area decline in the 1990s.

Sprawl and intensification are issues largely of concern to a professional cadre in each region, including provincial officials, municipal and private planners, academics, architects and some journalists. As an issue of concern to the larger public, however, the need for regional planning and to manage growth is more on the public agenda in Toronto and Vancouver than in Montreal. Likewise, intensification is of much greater concern in Vancouver and Toronto where provincial and metropolitan policy efforts are strongest in forcing municipalities and neighbourhoods to address the issue.

Provincial Policies

In all three cases, provincial governments have expressed a policy interest in controlling sprawl and encouraging more compact urban forms. All three regions show the same range of provincial strategies: direct provincial involvement in metropolitan growth management, creation of metropolitan and sub-metropolitan planning institutions, and influencing municipal planning.

The emphasis given to these various policy instruments has been markedly different across the three case study regions. In the Vancouver region, the province has kept control of certain metropolitan growth management levers (such as regional transit and highway planning and the arm's length ALC), but has chosen to rely heavily on regional institutions, which in turn rely on municipal cooperation for their effectiveness. The province has made little attempt to directly influence municipal planning policies in managing growth or promoting denser or more affordable housing.

In the Toronto region, the provincial government has used the broadest range of policy instruments: it has intervened directly in metropolitan planning in its decisions over major tranportation and sewerage investment, has attempted to create more of a top-down metropolitan planning regime through the Office for the Greater Toronto Area, and has attempted to control municipal planning policies through its official plan review process.

In the Montreal region, provincial policy instruments have been less forceful: the province makes the key decisions concerning transportation and transit planning and has established the agricultural land protection commission, but has not made any attempt to create institutions of metropolitan cooperation, and has intervened little in municipal planning decisions.

Metropolitan Planning

The metropolitan governance and planning institutions in the three regions vary widely. The Vancouver region has a single upper-tier government covering most of the urban region, while in Toronto, there are five upper-tier governments and in Montreal there are 13.

In Vancouver, the GVRD has a long-standing metropolitan planning framework in place, but is relatively weak in its implementing authority compared to the powers of say upper-tier governments in Ontario. Even with their considerable planning powers, however, upper-tier governments in Ontario can not serve as effective instruments of metropolitan-

wide planning because of the spatial fragmentation and competition among them for population, employment and infrastructure spending. There the Office for the Greater Toronto Area has brokered a regional strategy, including an urban structure, and population and employment allocations. The Montreal region has no metropolitan-wide administrative structure and no regional plan in place to coordinate the extremely large number of municipal governments in the region. Thus, none of the study regions has an effective metropolitan-wide planning authority in place.

In all three regions, there is some evidence that provincial governments are loathe to create effective regional governance and planning institutions that could challenge them for power. This was most clearly seen in the case of Vancouver, where the provincial government actually abolished regional planning authority, but many observers believe that this is also the case in Montreal and Toronto, where provincial governments have tried a number of governing innovations but have avoided metropolitan-wide institutions under municipal control.

The dynamics of regional planning are similar in the three regions studied: the central cities offer general support for regional planning, while suburban municipalities resist it wholesale or in key parts. Suburban resistance is especially strong when regional planning involves tax pooling or other forms of fiscal transfer to the service-burdened central cities, or implies a significant reduction in suburban employment growth potential.

Growth management has been conducted through two main vehicles: urban structure planning and growth allocation. The Toronto and Vancouver regions have undertaken some planning effort to create a hierarchy of metropolitan centres comprised of the core area and suburban sub-centres. In Montreal, this has been attempted by the Montreal Urban Community, the largest and most effective of the upper-tier governments, but not on a metropolitan-wide scale.

None of the three regions has managed to forge the necessary link between regional urban structure planning and transportation planning. In the Montreal region, there is no metropolitan-wide transit planning authority, nor is there one in the Toronto region. In Vancouver, a metropolitan transit authority only has advisory status to the provincial government. This makes for mixed record in term of the coordination of transit services and land use decisions on a metropolitan scale. On the one hand, major provincial investments in rapid transit have, in a general way, supported the urban structure concept in each region. On the other hand, highway development in all three regions has had the opposite effect, promoting an undifferentiated spread of the urban fabric.

The greatest threat to transit effectiveness and efficiency in the three regions are the land use decisions of suburban municipalities who continue to approve plans for low-density segregated development. On this score, the strongest link between transit goals and land use has been made in the Toronto region, where the Ontario government has attempted to influence municipal planning in favour of higher densities and mixed-use development.

All three metropolitan areas are now in the process of developing regional transportation plans, and all three are using a consultative provincial-municipal framework. Because provinces are responsible for infrastructure development and the municipalities for land use planning, this holds the greatest promise for linking the two planning processes.

Regional population allocation has been the other main instrument of metropolitan planning. In both Vancouver and Toronto, the metropolitan planning agencies have attempted to direct population growth toward central cities and away from the suburban fringe. Our review of these efforts has suggested only moderate success in following through with growth management targets in official plans and in changing actual growth patterns. The main barrier to more effective management of population growth has been the lack of coordination of strategic decisions at the provincial level.

Municipal Planning

Where municipalities in each of the study regions have undertaken housing intensification initiatives, they appear to be reacting primarily to changing local economic, demographic and fiscal conditions rather than provincial policy pressures.

In the core cities, municipalities are highly motivated to reduce commuting into the core, to meet changing housing demand, to use existing infrastructure, and, in the case of Montreal, to stem population decline. In two of three cases (Vancouver and Montreal), the core city operates under special provincial charter that allows significant policy innovation.

Some standard principles are visible in core city intensification efforts. Most have sought to preserve existing neighborhoods as far as possible, direct growth to retail and high-transit capacity nodes and corridors, and create "new neighborhoods" in obsolete industrial and railway areas, and along waterfronts. All three core cities have been very active in encouraging the provision of social housing through municipal housing corporations and city-owned land. Adaptive reuse policies are in place or under consideration in each municipality, and small-scale infill is routinely permitted.

There are, however some differences. By adopting the neighbourhood centres idea in its recently approved official community plan, the City of Vancouver has forged ahead of Toronto and Montreal in promoting neighbourhood change. A similar policy would certainly be met with major opposition in Toronto and would not be seriously contemplated in Montreal where growth pressures are not as intense. Vancouver's success in this and other aspects of intensification policy may be partially attributable to its strong program of public participation in making the trade-offs between protecting neighbourhood character and promoting a functionally efficient regional system from which central city dwellers will benefit.

Another difference relates to secondary apartments: they are allowed in Toronto, partially allowed in Vancouver, and not allowed in Montreal. Montreal is unique in that the municipal government does not require private developers to consider or provide affordable housing in larger projects.

There are many common obstacles to intensification in the central cities. In particular, developers are sometimes dissuaded from undertaking residential projects in these areas because they feel that:

- there is little opportunity for economy of scale as infill projects are site-specific and the plans cannot usually be repeated for other sites
- the zoning and administrative procedures are more complicated and demanding
- local opposition to infill projects is likely to be greater in the central area than on the urban fringe
- it is difficult to assemble land in the central area and land prices are higher.

There is some evidence that obstacles to redevelopment arising from soil contamination on industrial sites are worse in the Toronto region than in Vancouver or Montreal. This is partially due to the severity of the contamination in Toronto and to the strictness of the provincial regulatory framework governing decommissioning of industrial sites. Intensification efforts encounter stronger resistance from heritage activists in Montreal than elsewhere, although this is a substantial force against redevelopment in all three central areas. In Vancouver, building heights are especially controversial because of the reduction in view they portend.

Suburban areas in the three study regions are adopting intensification policies in response to an aging population, fiscal constraints, market trends toward smaller housing units, concern to preserve environmental features, and the need to control the gradual market-led urbanization of some parts of the suburban landscape.

Intensification policies in the suburban areas of the three regions are more haphazard and difficult to classify. Some suburban municipalities are strongly resistant to changing the built form, while others are more enthusiastic about the prospect of intensification. Many suburban municipalities in all three regions have adopted policies to promote arterial intensification, smaller-lot greenfield development, secondary suites, and infill development within neighbourhoods. In the Vancouver region, suburban municipalities are also promoting town centre development around a number of major nodes with high-order transit facilities. So are some suburban municipalities in Toronto and the more mature suburbs in Montreal.

The main obstacles to intensification in suburban areas of the three study regions are the widely shared antipathy toward higher-density urban-style development, the desire to limit the amount of affordable housing in the community, the ready availability of greenfield sites for new development, the political influence of development interests, the lack of consensus among municipal officials and planners on the undesirability of low-density development, the reluctance of professionals involved in urban design (e.g., transportation and public works engineers) to adopt new, more compact standards, and what appears to be a locked-in dependence on the private automobile for suburban travel.

1. The Compact City: Definitions, Literature Review and Study Methods

1.1 Introduction

Recently, the vision of a more compact urban form has become a dominant paradigm in the Canadian and international planning literature. Over the last five years, planning documents have regularly proclaimed the emerging consensus that cities must pursue new patterns of development that will result in more compact urban forms. The number of planning and urban research agencies and reports that have adopted this model is astonishing. In the United States, the concept of more compact growth has been incorporated into the planning strategies of a number of states, including Florida, Oregon, and New Jersey (DeGrove 1992). In the United Kingdom and Australia, urban "consolidation" is firmly on the planning agenda, and, internationally, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) has strongly endorsed compact urban form in its widely circulated Green Paper on urban policy (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development 1990).

At the national level in Canada, the compact city has been endorsed in the publications of the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation, CMHC (D'Amour 1991; 1993), the Canadian Urban Institute (1990), and the Canadian Institute of Planners (1990). At the provincial level, provincial ministries of municipal affairs and housing in British Columbia (1995), Ontario (1992), and Quebec (1994) have adopted positions, policies or legislation in favour of more compact urban forms.

In larger metropolitan regions, planning bodies or special commissions considering metropolitan-wide planning issues have also embraced the compact city as a model for future development: the Greater Vancouver Regional District (1993), the Office for the Greater Toronto Area (1992), the Greater Toronto Area Task Force (1996), and the Task Force on Greater Montreal (1993).

At the local level, a survey of planning officials in urban areas across the country conducted by Isin and Tomalty (1993) revealed that two-thirds of respondents were willing to say that they personally supported intensification as a policy goal in their municipalities and less than 14 percent were opposed. Many municipalities across Canada have undertaken planning studies to determine opportunities for creating more compact forms (Kitchener 1991; Halifax 1992; Regina 1993; St. John's 1992; City of Thunder Bay 1991).

The shift of the compact city notion from its status as a minority utopian vision to the mainstream of the planning literature can be attributed to widespread fiscal, social and environmental concern with conventional patterns of urban development. The efficiency of development in terms of resource use, land consumption and fiscal burden has long been a planning motif. But, as Bourne (1991) remarked:

> What is new is the increased awareness of the inequities involved in current land development practices and of the longer term social and environmental costs of

> uncontrolled low-density growth. The question of interest here is the possibility of reducing and redistributing some of these costs by encouraging new urban forms and a different balance of growth between new suburban greenfield sites and the recycling of existing built-up landscapes.

As the compact city has moved to centre stage as a planning objective, two planning techniques have come into wider use as instruments to achieve compact urban form: intensification and growth management.

The word "intensification" is used to refer both to an observed development trend towards higher densities than was conventionally the case and to the public policy objective of achieving such development patterns.[1] The main focus of this report will be on intensification as a policy objective.

We may distinguish between policies that encourage intensification of already built-up areas versus intensification of newly developing areas on the urban fringe. In already built-up areas, the most commonly used intensification typology in Canada (Canadian Urban Institute 1991) comprises:

- **Conversion**: increasing the number of households that can be accommodated in existing detached or semi-detached single-family dwellings through renovation and/or additions
- **Infill**: the construction of new housing within existing serviced residential areas on vacant or underutilized sites, in a form which is physically integrated with the surrounding neighbourhood
- **Redevelopment**: the creation of new housing units through the redevelopment of currently underutilized sites (whose uses may be obsolete) in already built-up and serviced districts
- **Adaptive reuse**: the construction of new housing within sites that may originally have been designated for non-residential uses, and which now can incorporate residential development.

In greenfield areas, intensification policies may aim to:

- increase the range of housing types to include more medium- and higher-density housing in new residential areas
- increase densities of ground-related housing by encouraging smaller lot sizes.

The above typology only relates to intensification at the site level, and this, indeed, is the most common and enduring usage of the term. At this level, an intensification policy usually boils

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[1] Thus, when we say "mainstreet intensification" we may be referring to either an observed pattern of density change or to the policy objective to achieve this pattern.

down to an attempt to remove planning, financial and political barriers to—or provide incentives for— site-level density changes. Intensification policies may also operate at the neighbourhood or community-wide levels. Neighbourhood or community-wide initiatives could include the planning of compact new towns, up-zoning of whole neighbourhoods, or the establishment of higher-density development nodes around transit facilities and along transit corridors. While achieving intensification at this higher level will usually entail policies of the site-level type, it may also involve policies that influence population growth, limit the amount of new land available for development on the urban fringe, limit development in non-urban areas, or guide infrastructure investment (such as transit) so as to support growth in certain areas. Some have called these latter "community intensification" policies in order to contrast them with site-specific "housing intensification" policies (Borooah 1992). Community intensification—or growth management, as it is usually called in the US and, increasingly, in Canada—involves a broader attempt to manage how communities grow so as to produce a more compact urban form.

In metropolitan areas made up of a large number of municipal units, we may also speak of growth management at the regional level. At this level, intensification policies direct development away from non-urbanized municipalities, slow down rates of growth in suburban municipalities, and direct growth into the regional core, usually the historic centre of the metropolitan area or a network of sub-centres spread throughout the region. Regional growth management policies use similar techniques to those at the local level, including infrastructure investment planning and population targets, but also usually involve mechanisms to coordinate planning and development across the municipal units in the region. The research conducted here is meant to shed light on growth management as a planning strategy at both the local and regional levels.

Finally, we should note that intensification can involve, and apply to, the whole range of non-residential uses, including industrial, commercial, and institutional. Some authors have pointed to the importance of non-residential uses, for example, school playgrounds, highway interchanges, or environmental services such as storm water storage, in achieving intensification (e.g., Whitwell 1995). But as Lynch (1981, 264) says, "the density of housing is always a fundamental decision in city design. It sets the framework for all the other features and has far-reaching implications." For the following reasons this study focuses on the density of residential or mixed-residential areas:

- housing occupies more land than any other urban land use
- housing plays a major role in determining the size and composition of a community's population
- homes are the places of residence of the region's labour force and consumers, and therefore play an important role in the locational decisions of many retail, financial, personal and community services
- housing and neighbourhood characteristics are the most important factors considered by people when choosing where to live in the region

- homes are the origins of daily travel; hence the distribution of housing is a prime determinant of travel mode, which in turn has a major impact on land consumption for transportation facilities.

1.2 The Benefits of the Compact City Model

The emergence of the compact city notion into the mainstream of planning literature and practice can be attributed to widespread concern with the economic, social and environmental costs of conventional patterns of urban development. Social equity, economic efficiency, and environmental soundness are the commonly accepted building blocks of sustainable development, to which its advocates have linked the concept of the compact city (Canadian Institute of Planners 1990). This section surveys the purported benefits of the compact city relative to traditional regional and suburban development patterns, examining these three factors in turn.

1.2.1 Social Benefits

The earliest critique of suburban sprawl was based on the contention that low-density scattered settlement patterns could not form the basis for a vibrant, meaningful community life. This critique can be traced at least as far back as the writings of Benton MacKaye of the Regional Planning Association of America (Alexander and Tomalty 1994). In his 1928 book, *The New Exploration*, he divided the urban region into three distinct environments, each having its own integrity: wilderness (primeval), countryside (rural) and urban (communal). In his view, sprawl, a "low grade urban tissue," compromised the integrity and distinctiveness of each of these environments and violated their residents' psychological needs. "These souls live all in a single environment: not city, not country, but wilderness—the wilderness not of an integrated, ordered nature, but of standard disordered civilization" (quoted in Hiss 1990, 189).

This cultural critique of suburbia continued into the middle part of the century. In the 1940s, Paul and Percival Goodman published their book, *Communitas*, which disparaged the suburban interpretation of the Garden City concept: "rather than live in a Garden City, an intellectual would rather meet a bear in the woods" (1960, 35). In 1961, Jane Jacobs published her work, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. In it, she criticized the received principles of modern planning as irrelevant to how cities actually grow and function. She, too, deprecated the Garden City concept of Ebenezer Howard and the sterile low-density suburbs and single-use districts she felt his ideas had helped to spawn.

In the 1960s and 1970s, the critique of suburbia dovetailed with the growing concern over class and racial segregation in US cities. There, urbanists identified traditional suburban development patterns as a physical expression of an exclusionary society that the white middle-class had built as it fled the inner cities. Downs (1972) argued that "opening up suburbia" would allow low income households to escape the ghetto, give a better education to their children and take advantage of expanding suburban job opportunities, thereby helping to eradicate inner-city poverty and lessen the possibility of racial and class conflict.

More recently, the social critique of suburban development has shifted to the claim that suburbs, originally based on the concept of the nuclear family with a male breadwinner and a female home worker, no longer reflect social realities. The US designer Peter Calthorpe (1993, 15) put it this way:

> The nuclear family, for whom suburbia was conceived, now represents barely one out of four new households. But we are still building W.W.II suburbs as if families were large and had only one bread-winner, as if jobs were all downtown, as if land and energy were endless, as if another lane on the freeway would end traffic congestion.

One key demographic change is the gradual aging of population in many communities (Hodge 1995). Another is the falling average household size: as family size decreases and as more and more individuals choose to live alone, populations in some mature areas with stable housing stocks actually decline. Rising affluence and repeated waves of new immigrants also affect the demand for housing type and location (Harris 1991). Finally, with the mass recruitment of women to the paid workforce, the isolation and car-dependence of suburban houses appears less appropriate to many women and their families. These demographic changes point towards a shift in housing demand away from larger, single-family houses towards a wider range of housing choices, including smaller- and medium-sized new houses and units that can be provided through infill and conversion of existing stock (Cooper Marcus 1986; Booth 1985; CMHC 1995; Michelson 1985; van Vliet 1991). Furthermore, these demographic changes may be contributing to a limited "back to the city" movement that is creating greater demand for housing in central cities (Bourne 1992a).

1.2.2 Economic Benefits

The social critique of the suburb relates primarily to the segregated land uses traditionally found there. The economic critique of sprawl can be related to two other features of conventional suburban development: the deconcentration of land uses to lower densities and the decentralization of population and employment from the traditional core to suburban locations.

In the residential context, deconcentration refers to the predominance of low-density detached residential units. Wheaton and Schussheim (1955) proposed several hypothetical development patterns to accommodate additional residential growth in three Massachusetts cities, and analyzed the impacts on municipal costs of density, size of settlement and distance from the city centre. The authors found that service costs of water supply, sanitary sewers, and streets tend to decrease as residential density increases. They attributed this to a reduction in length of streets and utility lines per dwelling. Their conclusions were reinforced by Isard and Coughlin (1956) in a similar study of hypothetical settlements.

The Lower Mainland Regional Planning Board in British Columbia was one of the first Canadian planning agencies to express concern over the costs of servicing low-density development. In 1956, it conducted an analysis of utility and servicing costs (road paving, road and ditch maintenance, and water supply costs) of three zones representing different

population densities in the Surrey region. The board concluded that these costs were significantly higher in lower-density areas than in the higher-density areas.

In 1977, the Real Estate Research Corporation published the results of what became the best known study on this topic, *The Costs of Sprawl*. The study examined costs of various development patterns for six communities and six neighbourhoods ranging in population densities. It included capital and operating costs of utilities (sewers, water supply, storm drainage, hydro) and "soft services" such as police, fire and schools. The authors found that contiguous, compact development is less costly than sprawled development.

More recently, a study along these lines was completed by Essiambre, Phillips, Desjardins Associates for CMHC (1995). It explored differences in public and private costs for two types of development: a conventional suburban design and a more compact "neo-traditional" design. The authors concluded that:

> The infrastructure in the alternative plan, featuring a denser development and a broader mix of house types and land uses, is more cost effective for both the public and private sectors. The total life-cycle cost (over a 75-year period) of the infrastructure in the alternative plan is approximately $11,000 per unit, or 8.8 percent less than in the conventional plan.... The per unit cost of savings associated with the alternative plan is attributed to the increase in residential density, which spreads the cost of the infrastructure over more units, and to the increase in land-use mix, which reduces the residential sector's share of capital, operating and maintenance costs. (30)

A related economic argument in favour of compact cities is that a greater mix of housing in new developments can create communities that are more sustainable from an infrastructure point of view:

> Because new suburbs are targeted toward specific homogenous groups...they require a disproportionate volume of services unique to the target group (e.g., schools).... As the population enters the next stage of its life cycle, services initially provided become redundant, and new services, consistent with the life cycle, have to be provided (Mathur 1990).

Decentralization is another principle feature of urban evolution. Critics of suburban sprawl claim that decentralization has two main economic disadvantages: it leads to the economic decline of the central city and to underutilization of existing public investment in infrastructure, and it requires expensive infrastructure development on the fringe.

Among the first to make the argument that suburban development is a causal factor in the loss of population and economic activity in the central city was Thompson (1965). He claimed that the flight of the middle and upper classes had a tendency to depress residential property values, with obvious repercussions for the local tax base. A downward spiral sets in as commercial and industrial sectors follow customers and employees to the suburbs. Similar arguments have been made by the critics of sprawl:

> Although the debate on whether and to what extent urban sprawl is detrimental to regional growth and wealth is ongoing, there is little doubt that it threatens the inner

city, whose demographic, economic and fiscal decline can be partly imputed to unregulated suburban expansion (Des Rosiers 1992).

Several studies have compared the servicing costs of fringe development with infill development of the already built-up area. Cost savings are greatest when incremental infill development exploits excess service capacity, such as existing schools. A study undertaken by CMHC in 1981 showed that a population increase of 5,000 in the inner city could save $12.5 million by avoiding the need to create new school facilities for greenfield development (Kearns 1981). Another CMHC-sponsored report—a case study of St. John's Newfoundland— found that, given excess capacity in infrastructure and services, densities could be increased in already built-up areas with negligible effects on capital costs. Where increased densities implied greater operating costs, such as in garbage collection and waste disposal, the enhanced assessment base was enough to neutralize the change (Barnard 1981a). A Winnipeg case study confirmed these conclusion. It also found that intensification of existing built-up areas could lead to better use of transit facilities and existing expressways by reducing commutes to work, resulting in significant cost savings (Barnard 1981b).

1.2.3 Environmental Benefits

Historically, many writers concerned with the environmental effects of urbanization have favoured the decentralization of major cities into smaller settlements (Alexander and Tomalty 1994). Concerns were expressed about the degradation of the environment that resulted from urban crowding and concentrated industrial activity. Bookchin (1973), for instance, conceived of the ideal urban form as consisting of smaller, self-contained cities with plenty of open and green space, buffered by rural areas and connected by efficient transportation systems. Although concerns about higher-density urban living have not been eliminated among environmentalists, the balance of environmental opinion has shifted decisively toward more compact urban forms (Paehlke 1991).[2]

A key environmental argument against low-density suburban development is that it increases the need for motorized transportation. Holtzclaw (1991) compares vehicle miles travelled per capita and per household for several jurisdictions. The results show a consistent pattern: doubling residential or population density reduces the annual auto mileage per capita or per household by 20 to 30 percent. Based on his empirical work relating land use to transportation, Cervero (1991) has argued that intensification, mixed land-use, and a better balance between jobs and housing are essential ingredients for reducing automobile use.

Related to automobile use is the issue of air quality. Automobiles are responsible for over 40 percent of all air pollution (Brown and Jacobson 1987). Downing and Gustely (1977) found

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[2] The list of environmentally-oriented organizations advocating more compact urban forms in Canada is impressive. It includes the Ontario Round Table on Environment and Economy (1992), the former BC Round Table on the Environment and Economy (1994), the Fraser Basin Management Board (1996), the National Round Table on Environment and Economy (Roseland 1992), the Friends of the Earth (O'Brien 1991), the City of Vancouver's Task Force on Atmospheric Change (1990), Alberta's Environment Council (1988), and the Ontario Environment Network (1990). In the UK, the influential Friends of the Earth (Elkin 1991) have adopted the compact city position, and in the US it has been promoted by the World Watch Institute (Brown 1987).

that air pollution from automobiles was 20 to 30 percent less in a more compact community than in an sprawled development.

Higher densities also make public transportation more viable. A widely cited Australian study by Newman and Kenworthy (1989) of 31 cities in North America, Europe, Australia, and Asia, showed the direct relationship between residential density, the viability of public transit systems, and automotive fuel usage. A 1977 study by Pushkarev and Zupan showed that residential densities were an important determinant of transit use. They found that transit service became more feasible and auto use declined as residential densities increased.

Higher densities also enhance the potential for walking and cycling. The Angus Reid Group (1992, 5) looked at eight Canadian cities and compared place of residence, place of work, and mode of transport to work. They concluded that "higher densities and greater proximity of home and work... are required if the choice of mode of travel to work is to become more environmentally friendly or healthier."

The compact city may also reduce the cost of environmentally friendly services. Paehlke (1989) claimed that higher-density settlements are better able to afford recycling programs such as waste collection, facilities recovering waste materials, the marketing of waste materials, and the control and treatment of effluents and other forms of pollution. This argument is reinforced by Richardson (1992, 160) who argued that environmental "impacts may be more economically and effectively managed if the sources are concentrated than if they are dispersed."

The smaller living units and multiple dwellings associated with compact urban forms are more resource-efficient. Owens (1986) found that heat energy is more than 20 percent more efficient in semi-detached houses and nearly 30 percent more efficient in row houses than in comparably insulated single-detached dwellings. A mid-floor apartment requires about one-third the heat energy of a detached house of equivalent size. He also argued that high-density development makes district heating feasible. In another study, Downing and Gustely (1977) found that in high-density areas, energy consumption from auto transport, space heating and cooling requirements were more than 40 percent lower than in low-density residential developments. Water consumption was reduced by approximately 35 percent in high-density communities.

Another environmental argument advanced by promoters of the compact city idea is that it preserves farmland at the urban fringe. Because cities were often originally located so as to exploit an agricultural hinterland, urban sprawl tends to consume high quality agricultural land. Warren et. al. (1989) found that in the 20 years of urban growth from 1966 to 1986, large Canadian cities spread chiefly onto agricultural land: of the 301,440 hectares of rural land urbanized, 58 percent was of high agricultural capability. According to Maynes (1990) intensification of land use is the most important method of reducing sprawl onto farmland.

1.3 Challenges to the Compact City Model

The compact city model has been challenged on a number of grounds, including social, economic, and environmental. Here, some of the main points of this critique are reviewed.

1.3.1 Social Challenges

The social critique of the compact city takes issue with the claim that higher-density living is more vibrant, liveable, and community-oriented. Authors in this vein point to the considerable research showing that low-density communities on the suburban fringe are more desirable than higher-density central areas to a wide range of households. Among the "push" factors are high central area land prices, traffic congestion, the relatively unsafe conditions typical of inner cities, dislike of ethnic and racial diversity, aversion to high-density living, and an antipathy towards interaction with dissimilar social groups (Kivell 1993). Pull factors attracting residents and employers to suburban locations include lower land prices, the availability of land for residential and industrial development, a pleasant environment for raising a family, privacy, and a rural ambiance (Audirac, Shermyen and Smith 1992). In this connection, the point is often made that compact city enthusiasts are swimming against the tide and threatening to interfere with the clearly expressed housing preferences of the majority of the population (Harvey 1965).

Defenders of the compact city model have been able to counter these arguments to some extent. In response to the criticism that people "vote with their feet" in terms of housing preference by moving to low-density suburban neighbourhoods, Neuman (1991, 346) made the interesting distinction between the housing-type preference, which he admitted was overwhelmingly single-family, and the preferred form of community. "While Americans may prefer single-family homes, this does not mean they want them to exist in sprawling forms." He cited evidence demonstrating that community residents, when shown images of both sprawl and traditional housing and community types, overwhelmingly prefer traditional types. Other authors have pointed to the increasing acceptance of neo-traditional urban designs in spite of in-grained preferences for low-density suburban designs (Bookout 1992).

The social critique of intensification also points to the wide range of research that shows that increases in density are generally unwelcome to existing residents and have a range of negative economic and social impacts. A study done for the Ontario government by Klein & Sears (1983) found widespread resistance to intensification projects, especially when lower-income housing was being proposed. The authors found that resistance to intensification was greater in suburban areas than in central cores. A study done for the City of Vancouver (1986) found that concerns were highest in homogenous low-density residential areas, but that acceptance of intensification projects increased as densities and land-use mix increased. In the US, the Advisory Committee on Regulatory Barriers to Affordable Housing (1991) concluded that a pervasive NIMBY syndrome, especially in the suburbs, was one of the most significant barriers to affordable housing in urban areas across the country. A common theme among all these studies is that residents of low-density neighbourhoods resist higher-density housing because they believe it will affect neighbourhood quality (e.g., parking, parks, traffic), personal security, and property values.

Evidence is available to counter these claims. A growing body of studies points to the conclusion that intensification does not affect surrounding property values negatively. In Canada, Ekos Research Associates (1989) studied 51 non-profit housing projects randomly selected in three cities and found that the projects had no overall negative influence on the values of neighbouring properties. Another study by the same authors (1988) showed that conversions—such as the creation of basement apartments—had negligible impacts on surrounding property values. In the US, Martinez (1988) reviewed 15 key studies, dating from 1963 to 1986 on the impacts of low-income housing on surrounding property values. Fourteen of them concluded that there are no significant negative effects.

In response to criticisms about the quality of life in higher-density areas, compact city advocates claim that attention to design and process issues at the site level can obviate local social impacts. A study carried out in Vancouver, Ottawa, Montreal, and Halifax by Ekos Research Associates (1994) found that acceptance of higher-density affordable housing could be increased by appropriate project design, an open and thorough consultation process, and by avoiding over-concentrations of such housing in particular neighbourhoods. Along the same lines, a study by Energy Pathways (1994) in Charlottetown showed that neighbourhood concerns with social housing projects were higher for residents who were not aware of current project proposals than for residents that were aware, implying that increased community participation could enhance acceptance of intensification projects. This research is consistent with published reports of planners' experience with consultation programs, which show that an open process and appropriate design can go a long way towards overcoming neighbourhood concerns with higher-density development (Pianosi 1991).

From a design point of view, intensification advocates have recognized that concentrations of "towers in the park"—which attract the most public opposition—can no longer be considered the best way to increase land-use densities and housing supply in all situations. In this spirit, a number of studies and charrettes have been undertaken in order to show how moderately high densities can be achieved with low-rise and ground-related dwelling types in combination with more modest development standards (Lehman & Associates 1995; Canadian Urban Institute 1990). Other studies have been undertaken to show how suburban subdivisions can achieve higher densities without the repetitiveness and ugliness that has come to be associated with the concept (Hemson Consulting Ltd. 1993; Urban Development Institute Pacific Region 1991).

In terms of personal security, compact city advocates have tried to uncouple the association in many people's minds between density and crime. Long ago, Jacobs (1961) coined the phrase "eyes on the streets" to express the sentiment that dense, lively neighbourhoods were more likely to be safe than deserted ones. Bourne (1975, 9) has argued as follows:

> It is said, for example, that some environments inevitably lead to crime, social alienation and civic disorder. Of course, physical environments can accommodate, if not stimulate certain types of behaviour, both social and anti-social, but they generally do not produce that behaviour. Physical planning clearly should do all that it can to facilitate and stimulate positive social behaviour....But deviant behaviour is a social problem, not a physical or architectural one.

There is at least some evidence that higher-density or mixed-density neighbourhoods are no more likely to be affected by crime than more homogenous ones. Fowler has evaluated the impact of the design of the post-war city on human behaviour by studying 19 different Toronto neighbourhoods, ranging from the physically diverse to the physically homogeneous (e.g., those with only residential high-rises, or only suburban houses, or only warehouses). The author concludes that:

> The less overall small-scale physical diversity, no matter what the socio-economic makeup of the neighbourhood, the less neighbours knew each other, and the more crime, especially juvenile crime, there was. It is important to note that this relationship held up in the suburbs as well (1991, 31).

Finally, critics of growth management suggest that restrictions on the supply of new land at the urban fringe will tend to increase prices, especially for the existing single detached units (Simpson 1993). Evidence for this comes from the experience garnered during the first wave of growth controls in the 1970s, especially in the US. There, limitations on the construction of new housing resulted in higher housing prices and the displacement of development pressures to jurisdictions less able to manage growth (Navarro and Carson 1991).

> Advocates of more compact urban forms do not contest the notion that reducing the supply of new land for development on the urban fringe will tend to raise housing prices. However, they do contend that a distinction must be made between earlier, fragmented attempts to prevent growth on the urban fringe and more comprehensive growth management polices that include mechanisms to increase housing supply: i.e., streamlining the development approval process, setting housing mix and minimum density targets for new development, and capital grants to increase the production of affordable housing. Under these conditions, housing prices can remain stable as sprawl-limiting policies go into effect (DeGrove 1992).

1.3.2 Economic Challenges

The alleged economic benefits of the compact city have also been attacked. For instance, Feldman (1987) argued that the Real Estate Research Corporation study modelled different development mixes and demonstrated that service delivery is less expensive in compact zones, but that it failed to compare the cost of adding infrastructure to service population growth on the periphery with the costs of such infrastructure closer to the regional core:

> Because land at or near the center inevitably is more valuable than land on the periphery, especially in the presence of policies that raise doubt about the potential use of peripheral lands, the construction of additional facilities to service urban populations will be more expensive than new facilities at the fringe... Thus, planning that discourages sprawl may be protecting established economic interests, raising the land values of early occupiers while preventing newcomers from affording urban land and the services that accompany it (142).

In support of this contention, observers point to one of the most comprehensive reviews in Canada of servicing costs associated with different development options, the Greater Toronto Area Urban Structure Concepts Study. This study found that the capital costs of development

would be about the same over a 30-year period, whether the development represented a continuation of current spread patterns, clustered into higher-density nodal areas throughout the region, or concentrated in the existing built-up areas. The authors concluded that high costs of upgrading services in the urban core and acquiring land for parks and other facilities offset any per capita efficiency advantages of the central option compared to the spread option (IBI Group 1990).

This finding has had a major impact on the debate over sprawl in Canada. Even organizations that endorse the compact city idea on other grounds warn, on the basis of the IBI study, that "urban densification should not be justified solely on the basis of lower servicing costs to the public" where redevelopment of core areas might require new infrastructure (British Columbia Round Table on the Environment and Economy 1994, 87).

Advocates of the compact city have attempted to qualify the IBI conclusions on the grounds that the study was conducted in great haste and made a number of insupportable assumptions (Hitchcock 1991). In fact, five years later, the consultant revised its findings, explaining that "the study was carried out...in four months under intensive time pressure." The revised figures showed that, in fact, the central and nodal options would result in significant capital cost savings over the spread scenario: 14 percent and 10 percent respectively.

The fiscal studies supporting more compact growth patterns have also been attacked. Critics claim that the original engineering studies that supported the compact city model typically calculated costs of the infrastructure needed to service real or hypothetical settlements of different densities, but left out operating costs and the public costs associated with activities other than infrastructure investment. An alternative to the engineering approach is offered by statistical studies that regress actual public expenditures by municipal authorities against densities for a large number of urban regions. Studies using this approach tend to show that higher population densities are associated with higher per capita local government expenditures (Marchand and Charland 1992).

One of the earliest statistical studies on local government service costs was conducted by Brazer (1959) who analyzed data for 462 cities in the US. Except for highways and recreation, he obtained a positive correlation between per capita local government expenditures and population density. Another study by Bahl (1969) examined city expenditures for 198 central cities. Using the same categories of local government expenditures as those used by Brazer, he found population density to have a positive and significant influence on per capita expenditures, the only exceptions being highway and park expenditures. More recently, Ladd (1992) conducted research on 247 US counties to determine the impact of density and rates of population on the costs of providing public services. She found that the relationship between density and public expenditures (including operating, capital, and public safety costs) were U-shaped, with a trough at about 625 people per square kilometre (i.e., less than three units per net hectare). After this threshold, those counties with higher population densities had higher public sector spending than those with lower densities.

Two issues need to be raised in the context of these studies. First, those regression studies that looked at fiscal costs associated with larger cities found that public sector costs declined as the proportion of the metropolitan population found in the central city increased. This might imply that monocentric urban regions are more efficient from a fiscal point of view than dispersed urban regions. Secondly, in their review of the literature on the public costs of various development patterns, Marchand and Charland (1992, 19) pointed out that regression studies have difficulty isolating the effects of different development densities on public spending because they use a municipal-wide density measure, and warned that conclusions based on such studies are therefore of questionable validity. Although they recognized that engineering studies do not capture the full picture either, the authors favoured them as a basis for conclusions about the relationship between development patterns and public expenditures. As we have seen, such studies support the claim that higher-density urban forms are fiscally more efficient.

Critics of the compact city also question the connection made by pro-intensification writers between central city decline and suburban development. Garreau (1991) argued in his book, *Edge Cities*, that central cities are in decline for macro-economic reasons, with suburbanization as a symptom. He emphasized that edge cities simply mirror modern needs and technological evolution in transportation and communications, and that traditional downtown cores are now an anachronism. Thus, as a normal process of metropolitan growth, urban sprawl should not be unduly impeded by intensification policies.

While empirical justification for the claim that suburban development leads to central city decline has eluded the advocates of the compact city, there is some evidence that a healthy central city is essential for a sound regional economy. Ledebur and Barnes (1993) surveyed 78 metropolitan areas in the US and found that changes in central city median household incomes were strongly correlated with incomes in that city's suburbs. Where a central city was not doing well, its suburbs were also suffering, and vice versa.

1.3.3 Environmental Challenges

The environmental gains claimed by the proponents of the compact city depend largely on the claim that they would entail less commuting than sprawled cities. Some researchers have attacked what they see as the underlying supposition in the anti-sprawl literature, i.e., a monocentric model of urban development whereby residents' trip lengths increase as urban growth extends from a single employment centre. Gordon and Wong (1985) counter this model with a polycentric model, which states that trip-ends (especially for work trips) become more dispersed as cities grow and that this development is in many ways more efficient. To test for this, the authors used a national sample from the US 1977 Nationwide Personal Transportation Study. They concluded that dispersed work trip-ends had allowed for shorter work-trip distances for suburban residents in the largest cities.

In a later paper, Gordon and Richardson (1989) argued that, as urban growth continues, the monocentric city became inefficient due to increasing congestion costs close to the Central Business District (CBD) and that, as a result, a polycentric urban structure emerged. They found that dispersed and polycentric metropolitan areas facilitate shorter commuting times.

Because of changing urban structure, Poulton (1995, 91) maintained that intensification of mature neighbourhoods in the central area of the urban region is inefficient. "The transportation and locational benefits to residents in these areas are declining. The city form is changing and the attractive locations for jobs, homes, and services are located more and more in suburban belts."

The longer commute times expected by the monocentric model depends on the assumption that residents' place of work is exogenously determined, i.e., that their choice of employment will not be affected by their residential location. Recent evidence provided by Wadell (1993) and Levinson and Kumar (1994) suggests that residential and employment location are jointly determined, indicating that the city's inhabitants make location adjustments to reduce commuting distances.

In defence of the compact city, some have claimed that the polycentric urban structure model is only applicable to some cities—especially those in the US Southwest—and that other North American cities—notably Canadian ones—are still primarily monocentric (Berridge Lewinberg Greenberg Ltd. 1991b). In support of this view, Goldberg and Mercer (1986) have shown that, for a large number of economic variables such as manufacturing and wholesaling activity, retail establishments, and the number of hospitals, Canadian cities are more centrally-oriented in their urban structure than are their US counterparts. Bourne (1989) has examined commuting patterns in order to test the "multi-nucleation hypothesis" in the 27 largest urban regions of Canada. He concluded that:

> overall commuting flows still tend to be dominated by the widespread dispersal of employment throughout the suburbs and by the continued attraction of the central core in term of long distance commuting related to higher-order jobs and professional occupations. The multi-nucleated urban form... apparently has not yet arrived (325).

In 1994, Coffey conducted a case study of urban structure in the Montreal region. Noting that Garreau identified three models of poly-nucleation (cases where the CBD retains its traditional economic role; cases where economic growth is shared between the CBD and suburban centres; and cases where the CBD relinquishes its role to suburban centres), he concluded that "the Montreal CMA [Census Metropolitan Area] is thus situated somewhere between Garreau's first and second models, and is probably closer to the first than to the second" (95).

A recent study on commercial activity in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) found that there were 40,000 commercial outlets in the region, half of them in about 1000 commercial nodes. Within this diffuse structure, the authors found that:

> more than half the commercial activity is still located within Metro, the smallest in area of the five regional municipalities. Of the 56 percent of commercial jobs in Metro, 20 percent are located within the downtown core, 10 percent in the rest of the City of Toronto and 25 percent in that part of Metro outside the City... Comparisons of Toronto with other North American cities suggest that Toronto is unusual in the strength of the core, and the vitality and variety of retail strips within the inner city (Centre for the Study of Commercial Activity 1996, 105-106).

It is also widely recognized that, in Canada, the extent of suburban nucleation is partly an outcome of planning choices made by provincial, metropolitan and central city governments, all of which are strongly committed to the preservation of central city economic health (Bourne, 1992b).[3] To the extent that this process is under public control, it is unlikely to proceed to the point where the CBD loses its role as the employment centre in the metropolitan region. Thus, with CBDs continuing as major employment areas and commute destinations within metropolitan regions, a strong case can still be made for directing new population growth to central cities.

Some authors have also warned that in striving for more compact urban forms, we may put pressure on planning authorities to allow developers to convert green and open space in already built up areas to residential use. This would reduce wildlife habitat while increasing storm water run-off and discharge into water bodies (Audirac 1990). According to Hitchcock (1994, 15), "density can be something of a blunt instrument in relating urban development as it occurs 'on the ground' to various kinds of planning objectives." He goes on to point out that:

> the association of environmental protection with higher density tends to assume that 'the environment' is somehow outside the city. In this view, the relatively high density of Toronto is desirable because it reduces land consumption outside Toronto. Toronto's municipal area density has come at the expense of wetlands and stream courses within the city's boundaries.

In his review of the environmental effects of intensification, Paehlke (1991) acknowledged these and a number of other environmental risks of intensification, including potential negative micro-climatic effects and increased exposure to contaminated soils due to redevelopment of industrial land. He concluded, however, that most of these risks can be mitigated through appropriate design and complementary policy initiatives and that, on balance, the positive implications of the compact city outweigh the negatives ones.

Finally, it has been pointed out by detractors of the compact city model that the decline of farming in the urban shadow is related to larger economic forces such as changes in the global prices of agricultural products and the subsidy wars among developed nations. Given this situation, the concentration of population in compact cities may, ironically, serve to undermine the rural farm economy by depriving farmers of economic activity that could have sustained them, namely the right to sever or sell their land (Newby 1990; Breheny 1991). Recognizing this as a potential problem with intensification, compact city advocates have proposed mechanisms to compensate and support farmers outside the urban boundary, for example through the purchase of development rights, the transfer of development rights, differential taxation programs, and right-to-farm legislation (Mantell, Harper and Propbst 1990).

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[3] As Greenberg and Maguire (1988) pointed out: "The plan for deconcentrating growth in the Toronto region was a deliberate response to potential over-development in the central area of Toronto, not an unstoppable migration away from the city."

1.4 Study Objectives

This report uses a case study approach to explore growth management and intensification policy issues in the three largest metropolitan regions in Canada. Each case study attempts to:

- identify the full range of government agencies at the provincial, regional, and local levels that have adopted policies to promote growth management or housing intensification, and to survey those policies
- determine the degree to which such policies are linked between the various levels of government, so that a picture of the policy dynamics of growth management and intensification in each region emerges
- relate growth management and intensification policies to the policy context, i.e., the important ideas, institutions and interests in each region
- assess whether individual policies and the policy framework taken as a whole are likely to be effective in promoting growth management and intensification.

1.5 Study Regions

In defining metropolitan regions for planning purposes, Self (1982) has proposed several criteria: the need to embrace both urban frontiers and urban core, the need to encompass transportation patterns based on the existing urban form, and the need to look ahead to likely paths of urbanization in the future. The Census Metropolitan Area (CMA) as defined by Statistics Canada corresponds well to these criteria and is the basis for defining the urban region used in this report. Each study region is defined by the boundaries of the upper-tier municipal jurisdiction that incorporates the CMA. This approach is most convenient for purposes of analyzing policy issues and for some forms of data collection, although it may render a study area either slightly larger of smaller than the CMA. A detailed definition of the region in question is provided in the introduction to each case study.

The three metropolitan areas studied in this report are distinct from other urban areas in the country because of the forces impinging on their growth and development, and because of the problems intrinsic to large metropolitan areas:

Table 1-1: CMA Shares of Provincial Population, 1991

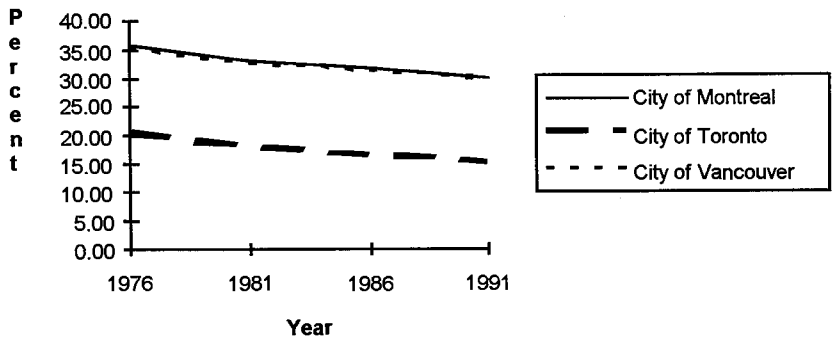
CMA	Percentage Share
Montreal	49.5
Toronto	41.3
Vancouver	48.9

- governance of the largest metropolitan regions tends to be more complex because of the large number of interdependent municipalities and different levels of municipal government
- the jurisdictional fragmentation of the city region tends to pit suburban municipalities against those of the urban core on issues such as transportation policy, taxation, waste disposal, growth management, and provincial funding mechanisms
- the problems facing central cities within the largest metropolitan areas are unique because of their regional function and higher service needs
- infrastructural requirements are unusual because of the concentration of population and economic activity over a large area
- environmental problems are serious, due to the cumulative impacts of urbanization
- competition among various land uses can be more intense because of the limited land base relative to population and economic activity
- social conditions—effectively accommodating new immigrants, high levels of crime, housing affordability, equality of access to services—are all issues of special concern to the largest metropolitan areas
- because each of the three largest metropolitan areas includes a large portion of the provincial population, the problems of these regions are of special concern to provincial governments, and often set the public policy agenda (see Table 1-1)
- political interests such as resident groups, environmental groups, and the development industry are often highly organized in metropolitan areas.

Also important is the fact that the three metropolitan areas are experiencing similar pressures to restructure in spatial terms due to broader forces of change in the global and continental economy over the last 25 years or so. These include the decline of industrial employment (especially in metropolitan cores), the shift in employment to the service sector, the spread of high-order information and communication technology permitting the reorganization of production, and the emergence of suburban office sub-centres (Coffey 1994).

These economic changes have been accompanied by, and interact with, major changes in the population distribution within each of the three metropolitan areas under study. Metropolitan areas in Canada have all experienced a decentralization of population: the central cities have declined in weight within the metropolitan area (see Figure 1-1) and there has been a deconcentration of population in terms of residential densities. Metropolitan populations have become more ethnically diverse, but residential areas have become more segregated by income and ethnicity (Bourne 1989).

Figure 1-1: Central City Share of Metropolitan Population, 1976-1991



Given these parallels, we should be able to identify common variables in the rise of growth management and intensification as planning issues, common opportunities and constraints encountered in pursuing policies to control sprawl and intensification residential areas, and common solutions that would be effective in all three regions.

Despite their similarities, however, the three regions relevant to the present research differ significantly with respect to:

- rates of overall metropolitan growth
- structure of governance in the metropolitan area
- density of development
- trends in residential development and housing stock
- provincial-municipal relations
- regional economic conditions.

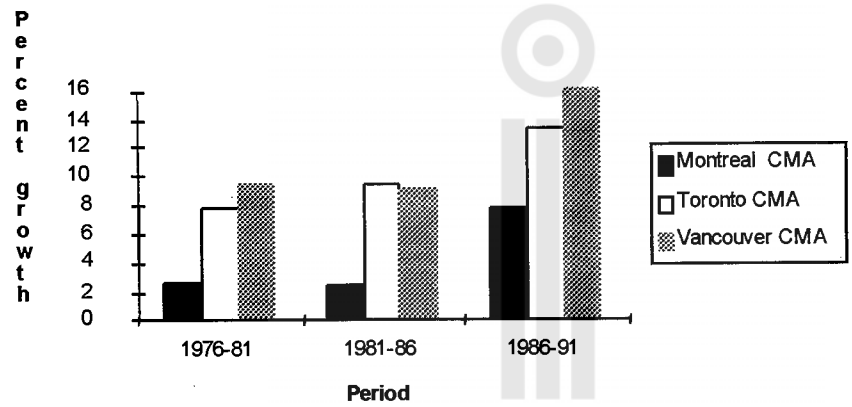
Without minimizing the importance of the other variables, let us focus for a moment on the first four. The rates of metropolitan have varied significantly over the past few decades among the three urban regions studied. So does the population growth expected over the next few decades. As shown in Table 1-2, the Vancouver region has experienced roughly a doubling of its population since 1961 and will see another 67.5 percent growth before 2021. The Toronto region has also experienced rapid population growth over the same period, and it is anticipated that growth will stay strong but decline to 58.8 percent over the next 30 years. In Montreal, in contrast, growth has been relatively weak and this tendency is expected to continue over the next three decades, with growth of less than 12 percent.

Table 1-2: CMAs, Past and Expected Population Growth: 1961-2021

	1961 (000s)	1991 (000s)	Absolute Growth 1961-1991 (000s)	Percent Growth 1961-1991	2021 (000s)	Absolute Growth 1991-2021 (000s)	Percent Growth 1991-2021
Vancouver	790	1,600	810	103.0	2,680	1,080	67.5
Toronto	1,800	4,200	2,400	126.2	6,670	1,590	58.8
Montreal	2,100	3,400	1,300	61.8	3,800*	400	11.8

* Figure is for 2023.

Figure 1-2: CMA Population Growth Rates



"Government density" is a measure of the number of municipal institutions relative to population in an urban region (Rothblatt, 1994). Table 1-3 shows that the number of municipalities in the Montreal region far outstrips those in the Toronto and Vancouver regions. Needless to say, this fact alone would suggest greater challenges for metropolitan growth management in Montreal than in the other two case study regions.

Table 1-3: Government Density in the Three CMAs

	1991 Population (millions)	Upper-tier	Lower-tier	Total	Local govt./ million pop
Vancouver	1.6	1	20	21	13.1
Toronto	4.2	5	30	35	8.3
Montreal	3.2	13	102	125	39.1

Table 1-4 shows that municipal densities—defined as the population of the jurisdiction divided by its total population—and the density gradient—defined as the change in density from the central city to outlying areas—vary considerably across the three study regions. Montreal and Toronto have relatively dense central cities compared to Vancouver, while the three regions have similar densities in their urban core areas. In the outlying suburban areas, Vancouver and Montreal tend to have higher municipal densities, making Montreal the most compact region in terms of gross land use, followed by Toronto, and Vancouver.

Table 1-4: 1991 Municipal Densities for Montreal, Toronto, Vancouver

Area	Density (people per square km)
City of Montreal	5741.7
City of Toronto	6540.3
City of Vancouver	4172.3
Montreal Urban Community	3555.1
Metropolitan Toronto	3611.8
Vancouver, Burnaby, New Westminster, City of North Vancouver	3128.7
Montreal CMA	891.2
Toronto CMA	697.2
Vancouver CMA	575.1

The composition of the housing stock among the three urban regions also differs significantly. In Montreal, the rental market has traditionally been more important than in either Toronto or Vancouver. Recently, however, the tenure split and housing stock types have been converging (see Figure 1-3).

Figure 1-3: Single Detached as a Percent of Total Housing Stock

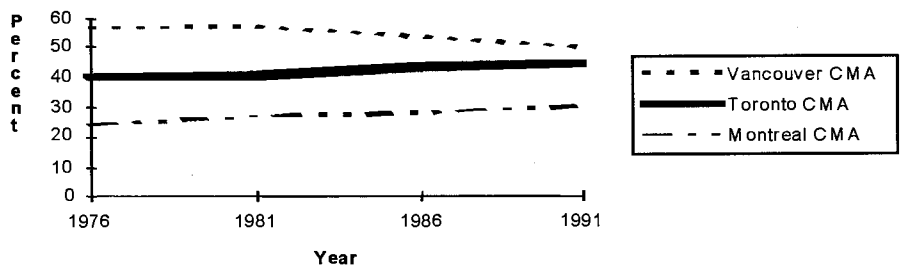
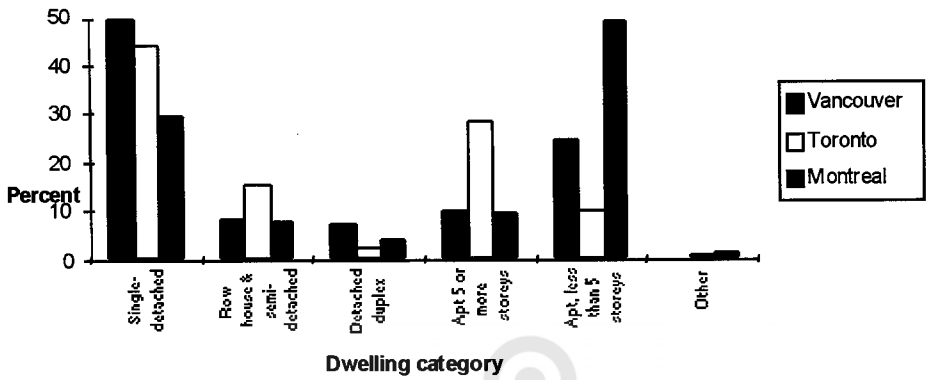


Figure 1-4 illustrates the prominence of low-rise rental apartment buildings in Montreal and of high-rise apartment buildings in Toronto.

Figure 1-4: 1991 Housing Stock Compositions



Provincial-municipal relations is another variable relevant to our research. Municipalities are constitutionally subordinate to provincial governments in Canada, as expressed in the 1867 British North America Act and the 1981 Canada Act. But the legal and administrative relationships between the two levels of government vary widely among the provinces. In Ontario, municipalities have had their major planning decisions vetted by the provincial government, which retains the power to approve or modify their official plans as it sees fit. The Ontario Municipal Board, a provincial arm's length tribunal governing land use conflicts, also serves to reduce the independence of municipalities in the province. In British Columbia and Quebec, on the other hand, municipalities enjoy much more autonomy, with fewer legal and administrative avenues available to the province to direct local planning decisions.

Economic conditions can also have a major bearing on the growth management challenges facing a region. As Table 1-5 reveals, employment levels in the Montreal CMA have consistently been below those in Toronto and Vancouver, suggesting that stimulating economic development might be a major concern of policy makers in that region.

These widely varying conditions mean that macro-level forces play out differently in the three regions, where they come into contact with local realities. Given their similarities and differences, then, these regions present a rich opportunity to investigate the factors behind intensification as a planning and policy issue.

Table 1-5: Number of People Employed as a Percent of Total CMA Population

	1971	1981	1991
Montreal CMA	44.6	42.0	43.3
Toronto CMA	51.3	48.2	49.4
Vancouver CMA	48.0	50.9	50.8

1.6 Method

The case study approach allows in-depth investigation of intensification efforts in a particular locale, and it assesses the interaction of various government agencies that promote, or are responsible for implementing, intensification policies. Typical of case studies, this report is based on a wide array of information sources. Five principal sources of information were used to construct each case and meet the research objectives.

1.6.1 Interviews

A "judgmental sample" of interviewees was chosen in each region studied. That is, the sample selected was judged to be the one most likely to yield an understanding of the subject of study in that area. Interviewees were identified using a combination of:

- "cold" calls to potential interviewees
- a snowball technique whereby interviewees were asked to suggest appropriate people at other agencies or organizations
- newspaper articles.

Interviewees fell into one of the following categories:

- Regional interests: spokespersons for a relevant organization with a regional or provincial scope. This included organizations likely to be involved in the growth management or intensification debate such as the development and building industry, environmental groups, labour organizations, social planning councils, housing advocacy groups and

regional or provincial government officials. The latter included officials from provincial agencies dealing with environment, housing, municipal affairs and special purpose bodies.

- Municipal interests: planning or political officials in an area municipality chosen for detailed analysis and capable of giving a municipality-wide perspective. An attempt was made to distribute municipalities studied around the study area, from core to periphery.

- Project interests: developers or planners involved in particular intensification projects.

A questionnaire was developed for each group of interviewees. In some cases, when detailed information was sought about particular policies or projects, interviews were conducted in an unstructured format. The research focus on policy and planning issues is reflected in the composition of the sample: in each region, the weight of interviews rested with provincial, regional, and municipal planners and policy personnel. All together, 143 interviews, lasting an average of about 1.5 hours, were carried out across the three urban regions. In order to respect the confidentiality of the interviewees, quoted sources are not identified by name in the report.

1.6.2 Newspaper Articles

Newspapers can serve as an important source of information on public issues that are giving rise to policy efforts to manage growth or intensify the urban form. We can tell from a survey of major newspapers in each region whether environmental, fiscal, economic or social concerns are dominant in a region. This gives us some insight into the purposes and intended results of policy efforts. Newspapers also provide detailed information about particular intensification projects and shed light on the community dynamics surrounding them.

With these objectives in mind, a major newspaper in each city-region was searched for articles on housing, land development, and growth-related issues. Key words (such as 'density' and 'sprawl') were used to perform electronic searches of full-text data bases. A further set of articles was identified using key words related to particular growth management policies or intensification projects. In Vancouver and Montreal, the Sun and the Gazette, respectively, are the only daily newspapers available for electronic searching of text; in Toronto, the Star was chosen over the Globe and Mail because it gives more detailed attention to local planning and development issues. A total of approximately 1200 articles was identified using this method.

1.6.3 Primary Literature

A wide variety of documents were reviewed and analyzed in order to explore the case studies. These fell into two groups:

- planning and policy documents such as provincial policy reports, official plans, planning department reports to council, planning studies, and consultant reports

- interest group documents, including newsletters, brochures, policy positions, and research reports.

1.6.4 Secondary Literature

Academic journals were also reviewed. The literature specific to the three metropolitan regions was used in order to gain an insight into the larger historical, political and economic dynamics of each region, while the literature on growth dynamics, regional planning, growth management, urban policy, intensification, and housing policy served to provide the general context for our discussion.

1.6.5 Survey Results

Information on intensification gathered by a national survey of municipal planning officials, was conducted in 1993 by Engin Isin and Ray Tomalty and published by CMHC. In particular, the results of this survey helped identify intensification policies and projects at the municipal level and to isolate local barriers to intensification.

1.7 Case Study Format

The three case studies presented in this report follow a common format. Each presents:

- the current jurisdictional framework including municipal and regional government institutions
- growth patterns, including population growth and spatial distribution across the region, housing characteristics, and density patterns
- growth-related issues are identified, covering economic, environmental, social and fiscal issues
- provincial, regional, and local policy and planning frameworks governing growth management and intensification and the degree to which different planning levels are linked with one another, or are consistent in their planning efforts
- emerging policy initiatives and challenges to growth management and intensification
- conclusions concerning the effectiveness of provincial growth management and intensification policies, metropolitan, and municipal planning.

Although this study uses a historical perspective to put the discussion into context, the main focus is on the emergence of growth management and intensification as a policy and planning issue between 1989 and 1996.

1.8 The Role of Federal Policies

The three case studies in this report focus on public policies that influence urban form at the provincial, regional and local levels. The role of the federal government will be dealt with briefly in this section.

The federal government's role in influencing urban form has been little studied in Canada because the constitutional division of powers gives the provinces exclusive jurisdiction over municipal institutions and local matters (Frisken 1994a). Furthermore, provincial governments have resisted federal intrusion into this area, as evidenced by their resistance to the short-lived (1971-1979) Ministry of State for Urban Affairs. Since 1980, the federal government has been careful not to relate directly to cities but to use its links with provincial governments to draw the cities in, especially in the funding of housing programs. On a political level, there is less connection between the federal and city level governments in Canada than in the US because national parties are not well established in municipal political systems and because of the regional cleavages of the federal parties. As Andrew (1994) pointed out: "This tends to reinforce the provincial-regional ties and to weaken federal-local links" (428).

Nonetheless, the federal government has played an important role in the development of the urban system across Canada through its policies on immigration, free trade, telecommunications, and banking, to take a few examples. It has also had an important influence in shaping particular urban regions through its influence over infrastructure (railways, airports and harbours), its regional development policies, and its joint funding—along with the provinces and municipal sector—of the infrastructure works program, initiated in 1994.

The potential for the federal government to influence urban form is most direct with respect to housing, thanks in particular to the activities of the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC). The four main functions of CMHC in this respect have been to promote home ownership, support social housing, encourage neighbourhood and housing rehabilitation, and conduct research into housing affordability and regulatory reform to promote intensification. CMHC has also been directly involved in redevelopment of government-owned land, such as wartime housing projects in Vancouver and Montreal and an environmental station in the Toronto region.

There have also been specific federal initiatives to aid in the redevelopment of urban core areas (Leo and Fenton 1990). For instance, the Winnipeg Core Area Initiative incorporated housing programs and expenditures from all three levels of government as part of a holistic approach that addressed social, economic, and physical concerns in central Winnipeg. Other urban redevelopment projects involving the federal government include False Creek and Granville Island in Vancouver, the St. Lawrence neighbourhood and Harbourfront in Toronto, the Ottawa Rideau Centre, and waterfront projects in Quebec City, Halifax, and Montreal.

The federal Bureau of Real Property Management, created in 1986, has a clear potential to influence urban development due to its large land holdings in urban areas. One of the bureau's first initiatives was to examine the Toronto area to identify opportunities for redevelopment of

federal lands. In some regions, such as Vancouver, the federal government is the largest single land owner.

Despite this considerable potential to influence growth patterns and housing development, the federal government has not attempted to intervene in urban development in any coordinated fashion with a concept of desirable urban form (Fallis 1994). Instead, the federal government has played what Frisken (1990) called a background role in urban affairs in Canada. Not surprisingly, then, the federal government has not become a major part of the regional discussion on intensification and growth management in any of the metropolitan regions studied in this report.

2. The Vancouver Region

2.1 The Region and its Governance

Alone among the three urban regions studied for this report, the Vancouver CMA is almost entirely encompassed by a single upper-tier municipal government, i.e., the Greater Vancouver Regional District (GVRD). Matsqui, the only municipality within the CMA but not within the GVRD, participates with the GVRD in strategic planning and in the provision of some services. Thus, for the purposes of this report, the study area is defined as the GVRD's planning area, including the 20 incorporated municipalities, three electoral districts, and Matsqui (see Figure 2-1).[1] In 1991, the district had a population of about 1.60 million. With only four percent of the province's land area, the GVRD has about half the population of the entire province.

The GVRD is governed by a Board of Directors comprised of elected representatives from the 21 communities in the metropolitan area. Directors representing municipalities are appointed from their local council for a one-year term, usually by the Mayor. In the case of the three unincorporated "electoral areas", regional directors are elected directly for three-year terms. Each director has one vote for every 20,000 population. Because no Director may have more than five votes, the municipalities of Vancouver, Surrey, Burnaby and Richmond each have more than one director.

The GVRD provides services that are regional rather than local in nature, including water supply, sewage treatment, air quality management, solid waste management, regional parks, and hospital planning. The district also has a Housing Corporation to provide non-profit housing.

The Development Services Department does research on regional development trends (including land use, population, economy, employment, and transportation) and provides coordination between regional development and transportation planning. The regional government has no statutory planning power over member municipalities, but has been preparing a regional plan since 1990, the Livable Region Strategic Plan. In parallel with the land use plan, the GVRD, in cooperation with the provincial and municipal governments of the area, has also been preparing Transport 2021. This is a medium- to long-range transportation plan for the region that will become part of the Livable Region Plan.

Finances for the regional government come primarily from its member municipalities, giving them a large degree of control over the level of services provided. About 12 percent of the property tax is transferred to the regional government and most of it (about 90 percent) is used for capital projects such as hospitals, water purification and delivery, sewerage, and solid waste disposal programs.

2.2 Growth Patterns

The Vancouver region is one of the fastest growing regions in North America. Since 1961, an average of about 40,000 has been added to the regional population every year. The population of the region has doubled in the thirty year period between 1961 and 1991, but remained about the same percentage of the province's total population.

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[1] The "Lower Mainland" comprises the GVRD and the new Fraser Valley Regional District. The latter was formed in 1995 as a result of the amalgamation of three former regional districts, including the Central Fraser, the Dewdney-Alouette Regional District, and Fraser Cheam.

Figure 2-1: The Vancouver Region

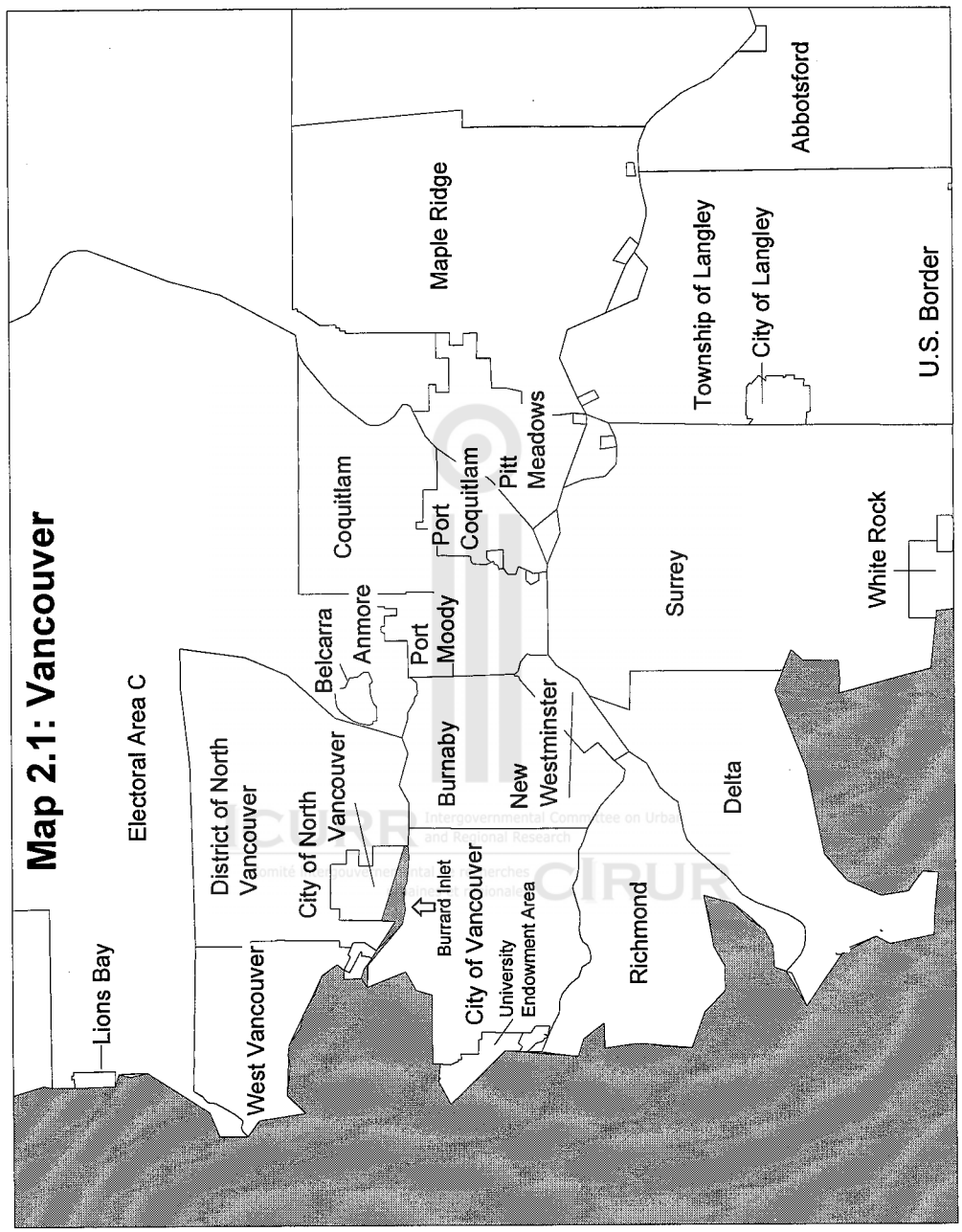

Table 2-1: Changing Population Distribution in the Vancouver CMA, 1971-1991

Territory	1971		1991	
	(000s)	percent	(000s)	percent
City of Vancouver	429	40	476	30
Inner Suburbs	236	22	279	17
Outer Suburbs	415	38	846	63
CMA	1,082	100	1,602	100

The population increase has not been evenly distributed throughout the region. The municipalities in the regional core—the City of Vancouver, Burnaby, New Westminster, North Vancouver and West Vancouver—have seen modest rates of population growth. For instance, Vancouver grew by only 1.5 percent between 1976 and 1981, but by 9.4 percent between 1986 and 1991. Outside the regional core, and up the Fraser Valley, growth rates are much higher: Maple Ridge, Pitt Meadows and Surrey had rates of growth between 30-40 percent between 1986 and 1991. Langley, Coquitlan, and Port Coquitlan had population growth rates of between 20-30 percent over the same period. Growth rates are much lower in the suburban areas north of Burrard inlet: the District of North Vancouver, the City of North Vancouver, and West Vancouver all had growth rates of less than 10 percent.

Population densities on the fringes of the Vancouver region are relatively high compared to the other two metropolitan regions studied. Even in the outer suburban municipalities, densities do not fall below 185 people per square kilometre, compared to only 33 people per square kilometre on the fringes of the Toronto region. On the other hand, the central city is less dense than in Montreal or Toronto: Vancouver had a population density of about 4172 people per kilometre, compared to 6540 for Toronto and 5741 for Montreal. Taken together, these numbers imply a less steep population gradient in the Vancouver region than in the other two metropolitan areas.

The population of the Vancouver region is expected to grow from a 1991 population of 1.6 million to 2.68 million people by 2021, a 67.5 percent increase. Although the growth rate is lower than in the previous 30 years (100 percent) the number of new people to be accommodated in the region is actually larger: 1.24 million compared to 890,000.

If current growth patterns were to continue, urbanization would be concentrated in the Fraser Valley east of Delta, south of the Fraser River. Approximately half the population growth until 2021 would be added in a corridor which includes North Surrey, the Langleys, Matsqui, and further east along the southern shore of the Fraser. About a quarter of the growth would be accommodated in the regional core (the Burrard Peninsula comprising the municipalities of Vancouver, Burnaby, and New Westminster) and the so-called North East Sector (the municipalities of Coquitlan, Port Coquitlan, Port Moody, Anmore and Belcarra). The

remaining quarter would be spread out across other areas of the region, namely the north shore of the Fraser River and the Delta/Richmond/south Surrey area.

2.3 Growth-Related Issues

Growth trends in the region have raised a number of concerns and issues, to which we now turn.

2.3.1 Environmental Issues

Opinion polls in the Vancouver region have consistently shown environmental issues to be at the forefront of public concern (Seelig and Artibise 1991, 49). This was confirmed by interviews and a review of newspaper coverage of growth issues in the region.

Attitudes toward development have been influenced by a strong public attachment to the city's spectacular natural setting, a combination of mountain peaks and ocean vistas. Concern over the loss of habitat, and of recreational and conservation areas has created public opposition to the spread of urbanization onto sensitive or valued green spaces such as wetlands and mountain slopes.

The problems associated with recent development patterns has given rise to unprecedented conflicts over growth in the region. In Delta, for instance, proposed development on the Spetifore Lands produced intense conflict after the area was approved for withdrawal from the Agricultural Land Reserve by the provincial government. In Surrey, the fastest growing municipality in Canada, conflict over greenfield growth resulted in the election of a new council in 1988 and the imposition of substantial growth controls. In Richmond, a bitter and protracted struggle was waged between the Save Richmond Farmland Society and the municipal council over development of the Terra Nova farmlands. These conflicts have helped to raise the issue of appropriate development patterns in the region, and has stimulated policy action in favour of more compact communities.

Vancouver is not a highly industrialized city, but has more serious air quality problems than might be expected. This is due in part to summer climatic patterns dominated by the Pacific High Pressure System, which tend to produce temperature inversions that prevent pollutants from dispersing. This sometimes produces serious carbon monoxide levels in the most densely populated areas in Vancouver. Sea breezes carry pollutants such as oxides of nitrogen and volatile organic compounds from the urbanized areas near the seaboard up the Lower Fraser Valley "funnel". The result is occasional episodes of severe ozone pollution in the region, especially up the Fraser Valley. Motor vehicles are the area's largest single source of air pollution, accounting for about two-thirds of pollutants. This helps to explain the attention paid in the region to the need to reduce automobile usage.

Vancouver's drinking water is drawn from mountain watersheds and has historically been of good quality, requiring little treatment.[2] In contrast, the quality of water in the Lower Fraser, its tributaries and on the ocean front is considered to be seriously degraded from urban processes. The 1989 GVRD Liquid Waste Management Plan rated only 7 of 21 area water bodies as in good condition. The GVRD dumps 300 billion litres of lightly treated sewage, 62 billion litres of untreated sewage mixed with stormwater run-off, and 365 billion litres of untreated stormwater run-off into the ocean every year. A recent study reported that 75 percent of bottom feeding fish in Burrard Inlet have pre-cancerous lesions and tumors as a result of the toxins dumped in into the water. According to Seelig and Artibise (1991, 5) "While many of these toxins came from industry, most are the result of urban runoff, of which the automobile is the main culprit." Thus, low-density, automobile-dependent growth patterns may be contributing to water quality problems in the region.

2.3.2 Transportation Issues

One of the key issues associated with existing growth patterns in the region is transportation. Residents frequently point to congestion on commuter highways into the regional centre as a major public issue compromising their quality of life. Congestion also spills over into city streets as commuters look for alternative routes.

Between 1985 and 1992, the number of automobiles used for commuting in the region grew by 32 percent to nearly a million, although population grew only 21 percent. Trip distances increased by 12 percent, trip time by about 20 percent, and trip speed fell by 8 percent. The proportion of trips on transit fell by 11 percent over the same period (GVRD 1993). These statistics paint a picture not only of a more car-dependent urban region, but of a less efficient urban system. The share of trips between suburban locations increased by about 6 percent while the share of trips from the suburbs to the City of Vancouver dropped by about 23 percent, suggesting a more diffuse pattern of movement in the region.

The goal of reducing automobile use in the region seems to enjoy widespread support. Serious air pollution and traffic congestion, along with a growing environmental lobby against contributing to greenhouse gases and global warming, have made this a major issue in the region. Most recently, the BC Energy Council released a report calling for fundamental changes in the lifestyle of urbanites in the province. The report calls for unprecedented government action to reduce automobile use in urban areas, including tolls on selected roads and bridges, allowing traffic congestion to worsen to discourage car use, higher taxes for cars that are not fuel efficient, controls on suburban sprawl (such as higher development cost charges), and policy supports for intensification.

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[2] Recently, however, periodic small scale mudslides - caused by a combination of heavy rainfall and human activity - have mudied water reserves.

2.3.3 Fiscal Issues

Low-density fringe development is widely seen as being a source of fiscal stress. As one suburban mayor put it:

> We labour under the burden of sprawl. We have over 700 kilometres of roads in the city, a capital deficit of half a billion dollars in roads that are needed but have not been built, and existing roads are not adequate to carry the traffic. We have people living all over the municipality and the more we upgrade, the more diffuse the population and the more costly to service.

The regional government provides many of the growth-related services: solid waste, water, and sewerage. The costs of regional services are expected to rise as the population continues to grow. In 1995, the regional government consumed about 12 percent of the property tax dollar, but that is expected to increase to 18 percent in the year 2000 if current development trends continue.

Low-density development also makes transit less feasible because of the link with automobile dependency. As the proportion of trips made by transit falls in the region, greater burden is placed on the provincial government to increase subsidies. This trend obviously contradicts the current climate of fiscal restraint.

2.3.4 Economic Issues

There are four key economic changes relevant to the present study: the shift of employment from the resource and industrial sectors to the service sector, the spatial shift of jobs from the centre to the periphery of the region, the constricted land supply for housing and increasing land prices.

The number of jobs in the Lower Mainland is expected to rise nearly 90 percent from 0.77 million in 1991 to 1.45 million in 2021. Service sector jobs are expected to grow fastest: finance, insurance, and real estate and commercial services are forecasted to increase by 100 percent to 120 percent; primary industry and manufacturing jobs will grow more slowly, only 30 percent to 60 percent in the same period. These variable growth rates will result in a shift in the sectoral balance of jobs: the service sector will grow from 49 percent to 53 percent of jobs in the region, while employment in the manufacturing sector will continue to decline, from 20 percent in 1991 to 16 percent in 2021. This trend will place greater pressure on former industrial lands in the metropolitan core to convert to other—such as residential—uses (Greater Vancouver Regional District, 1993a).

The suburbanization of jobs is also of key importance to issues of growth management and housing intensification. Just as population growth is occurring in the southern and the eastern portions of the region, so has employment growth. Between 1986 and 1991, the fastest job growth was recorded in Richmond, the North East Sector, Surrey, Delta, White Rock, and Burnaby, all of which saw increases in employment between 30 percent and 50 percent. In contrast, the City of Vancouver and the north shore of the Fraser saw almost no employment growth over the same period. Employment location is important because population growth

often follows employment opportunities, and because of the significance of work-related trips in regional travel behaviour.

Industry in the region has been gradually decentralizing throughout the postwar period. While the causes are complex, at least a few should be mentioned. Industrial location in the central area was based on waterfront access to shipping, railways, the availability of pumped water, and the supply of skilled labour. Now, suburban locations are more likely to meet the demands of industry: better access to airports and freeways, the availability of space for expansion that does not require assembly of small expensive parcels, high quality water with special sewer needs, no vibration or dust from trains to affect high-tech equipment, and a better trained workforce. Also important are the rising land prices in the central city, making conversion to residential more attractive.

A principle factor encouraging interest in intensification in the Vancouver region is the geographically limited supply of land available for development, with the Pacific ocean and mountains constraining development around the city. The GVRD estimates that land that has been identified as suitable for development as single-family housing will be exhausted within 15 years. This prospect has galvanized the development industry into promoting intensification policies in the region.

High land prices also encourage intensification in the region. One interviewee gave the example of Maple Ridge, where raw land has shot up in price from $10,000 per lot in 1984 to about $70,000 ten years later. Incomes have not kept pace with land and housing costs, giving rise to a market for smaller housing units. As a representative of the development industry said: "Even without a growth management strategy... from 1951 to 1991 we've gone from a 70-30 split to a 50-50 split. So it just shows you that incomes are moving toward multi-family, smaller houses." High housing prices have also produced conditions that favour the creation of secondary suites as a way of helping home-owners pay their mortgages.

2.3.5 Social Issues

Social issues are also of concern in analyzing the impacts of current development trends. This is related to an expected decline in the general quality of life, which includes the amount of time spent commuting to central locations from fringe areas, and declining environmental conditions such as air quality. Housing choice and affordability is also an important concern. As Vancouver's economy shifts to service-based employment, lower-paid service workers are being forced to travel greater distances from affordable fringe locations to central employment locations. The mismatch between housing needs and the housing supply also has negative consequences for businesses in the region, who are forced to pay higher wages for workers who have to pay higher housing costs and travel long distances across the region using a poorly developed transit system.

The general aging of the population is giving rise to an unmet demand for housing that is highly accessible to amenities and services. With social trends moving toward a significant increase in the elderly, youth, and lower income residents, especially in suburban areas, the

need for transit services will increase as will the threat of isolation in a car-dependent urban system.

2.3.6 Demographic Changes

Population growth has been accompanied by significant changes in the social and ethnic composition. The region is becoming increasingly more ethnically diverse. Over 30 percent of all residents are immigrants and analysts predict continued large numbers of new immigrants to Canada arriving in the area: about 26-34,000 per year. The composition of new immigrants is also changing: about 70 percent of immigrants in 1991 came from Asia, compared to only 48 percent in 1981. Increased immigrant numbers has enhanced demand for intensification opportunities, because many new immigrants (e.g., those from Hong Kong and Taiwan) are receptive to living in denser settings. Much of the real estate investment from Hong Kong is in high-density projects that were sold out in Hong Kong, projects that might not have been undertaken by local developers.

There is also an increasing diversity of family structure in the region, shifting gradually from the typical Canadian family characterized by two parents with two children. The fastest growing households are single-parent families, expected to grow from 13 percent in 1991 to 17 percent in 2006, and non-family households (i.e., people living alone), projected to grow from 31 percent of all households to 37 percent in 2006. These changes are related to another important trend: the reduction in average household size. Household size in the region has been declining from about 3.4 in 1961 to 2.6 in 1991 and is expected to decline further to 2.4 in 2021. These trends will enhance the demand for smaller units (including secondary suites) and housing near existing transit facilities and other services, most readily available in mature areas of the region. They also suggest that residential areas with a stable number of housing units will undergo slight population declines, freeing up services to support infill housing (GVRD 1992; United Way of the Lower Mainland and Associates 1993).

The population of the region is also aging. With lower fertility rates, longer life spans and exceptionally large baby boom generation, the average age is expected to rise from 34 in 1991 to 41 by the year 2016. About 71 percent of the population growth between 1991 and 2016 is expected to be people 45 years and older.

Over the 1980s, there was a significant increase in welfare and poverty rates in the region. In 1993, one in 14 residents was on social assistance, compared to one in 20 in 1981. The demand for low-cost rental housing is expected to rise steadily, especially from childless couples, single person households, and low- to moderate-income households. With the elimination of support from the federal government for new assisted housing, municipal governments are being challenged to find innovate ways of promoting affordable housing.

2.4 Provincial Planning Policies

The province does not have an explicit policy about the form of development it would like to see in the Vancouver region. It does, however, have an interest in promoting a more compact region and in this section, provincial initiatives on agricultural land preservation, affordable housing promotion, and environmental protection are surveyed.

2.4.1 The Agricultural Land Reserve

Most of the best farmland in BC is located in the Lower Mainland, where over half the province's population is also concentrated. Thus, there is a great potential for land use conflicts and a correspondingly strong incentive for provincial regulation of competing interests. The Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR), established in 1973 through the Agricultural Land Act, clearly expresses the provincial interest in preserving the foodland base for the province. The Act created a reserve of 4.7 million hectares of agricultural land, where agricultural uses would be favoured and non-agricultural uses would be regulated. The Act also set up a commission to oversee applications from landowners to remove land from the reserve. In the first twenty years, 30,000 such applications were received and 103,000 hectares were removed from the reserve, a loss of 2.2 percent (Planning Institute of BC News, June 1993). Of the 32,551 hectares originally designated in the GVRD, 1,403 had been removed by 1989, a loss almost double the provincial average.

The province-wide rate of loss is dramatically lower than before the creation of the reserve: from about 6,000 hectares per year to 765 hectares per year, or less than one seventh the former rate (ALC 1990). A study conducted by Environment Canada (Warren 1989) showed that only 21.6 percent of rural land converted to urban use in BC's seven urban-centred regions was prime agricultural land. Comparable figures for Canada as a whole and for Ontario were 53.4 percent and 78.3 percent respectively. The report also indicated that the Vancouver region fared well compared to other major metropolitan areas in the country: from 1981 to 1986, the Toronto urban region converted 10,047 hectares of prime agricultural land, Montreal converted 2,665 hectares, and Vancouver only 498 hectares.

The creation of the agricultural reserve was controversial in the early 1970s, but over twenty years later, "there is now a fairly general consensus that the reserve has made urban development more efficient and concentrated and has encouraged more compact housing" (Laviolette 1993, 13). Nonetheless, there has been severe pressure to remove sections from the reserve for urbanization.[3] Although the ALC made decisions about changes to the reserve boundaries—subject to appeal to the provincial cabinet—it had no authority over local and regional land use plans. Indeed, official plans did not always coincide with the ALR boundaries, giving rise to speculation on farmland adjacent to urban areas. Speculators

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[3] In the past, this took the form of proposals for golf course development, which were permitted by the Social Credit government but stopped by the NDP when it came to office in 1992. Golf course proposals are seen by many as "a foot in the door": they are not usually financially viable and often are a transitional stage between agricultural and urban uses.

purchased these lands and lobbied local governments for redesignation to urban uses. If municipalities in the district bow to this pressure and redesignate such land for future urban development, investment in the farm ceases, productivity declines and the rationale for removing the parcel from the ALR builds. In the long term, this dynamic served to undermine the integrity of the ALR. Recent changes to the Land Commission Act have helped to address this problem: local bylaws must now be consistent with the Act and official plans must refer to the ALC.

Whether or not farmland should be seen as a permanent land use is an important question facing the region (ALC 1990). While a rigid stand here would send the clear signal to municipalities and developers that urban boundaries are inviolable, it might also dampen regional economic development and inadvertently encourage leapfrog development into areas even further removed from the regional centre.

2.4.2 Housing Policies

As in other regions of Canada, the provincial government has been significantly involved in the housing market, creating a program framework that promotes both home ownership and the creation of affordable rental accommodation. These programs have probably had contradictory effects on urban form. On the one hand, provincial subsidies for home buying have promoted the conversion of renters in the central areas to home owners at the fringe. On the other hand, the province has acted in a number of ways that have promoted intensification. As a land developer, the province established the BC Development Corporation and assembled waterfront sites in New Westminster (Westminster Quay) and North Vancouver (Londsdale Quay), which were developed as mixed-use high-density projects. The province has also been involved in the direct provision and management of assisted housing through the BC Housing Management Corporation. BCHMC administers the Rental Supply Program that is designed to expand the supply of rental housing in low vacancy areas by assisting developers with financing of new rental projects. One of the principal developers involved in the program is VLC Properties, an innovative development firm that was created jointly by the City of Vancouver and several labour union pension funds to develop affordable housing in the central city. Through its Homes BC program, the province also provides capital funding to non-profit groups to assist them in the creation of below-market-price housing such as equity cooperatives.

Clearly, the province has been an active player in the provision of affordable housing. In contrast, the government has not shown strong leadership in guiding municipal actions through housing policy. Although the BC Municipal Act required that municipalities ensure a five-year supply of housing, it did not require them to permit a range of housing types or to create opportunities for affordable housing. In fact, the Act prevented municipalities (except Vancouver) from implementing inclusionary zoning bylaws, i.e., bylaws that require developers to include a minimum amount of affordable housing in major development projects.

This began to change in the early 1990s when housing affordability emerged as a major political issue in the province and a new NDP government was elected. In 1992, the provincial

government amended the Municipal Act (Bill 20) to require municipalities to include provisions for affordable housing, special needs housing and rental accommodation in their official community plans.

Also in 1992, the province appointed the Commission on Housing Options (COHO) to solicit opinion from a number of stakeholder groups (housing groups, local governments, the building industry, and others). In 1993, the Commission reported that many people's housing needs were not being met and called on the province to adopt a stronger role in the planning and provision of affordable housing throughout BC. Among their 57 recommendations were several that suggested the Municipal Act be amended to allow municipalities to:

- establish inclusionary zoning bylaws, i.e., zoning that requires a minimal amount of affordable housing in new developments.
- use bonus density and the transfer of density rights as a means to produce additional affordable housing
- lease residential land at below market rents to non-profit organizations
- establish special reserve funds for housing purposes
- allow as a right one additional residential dwelling (secondary suite) in existing and new detached dwellings
- prevent local governments from establishing regulations that impede the ability of home owners to create secondary suites.

In 1993, the Municipal Act was amended again (Bill 57) to allow municipalities to incorporate some of the recommendations arising out of COHO. The reforms permitted municipalities to use density bonusing. This planning instrument allows municipalities to negotiate with developers who want to exceed density standards, on the condition that they provide affordable or special needs housing units. Developers may subsidize the rent for such units on an on-going basis or transfer ownership of the units to a publicly-run housing agency. Alternatively, they may pay cash in lieu of creating affordable units, with the money to be used to fund social housing units elsewhere in the municipality.

Changes to the Municipal Act introduced in 1993 also enabled municipalities to enter into housing agreements to secure a supply of affordable housing. Housing agreements are legal agreements between the property owner or developer and the municipal government committing the landowner to provide affordable housing. They can be used to secure rental, cooperative and ownership forms of housing. The terms of the agreement can include who may occupy the unit, what rents or prices may be charged, and how these might increase over time.

Bill 57 also permits municipalities to lease residential land at below market rents to non-profit organizations, and to establish special reserve funds for housing purposes. In response to the

recommendations of the COHO report concerning secondary suites, the provincial government created the Secondary Suites Policy Committee in 1993 to advise the Ministry of Housing and the Ministry of Municipal Affairs on ways to "increase the number of suites and to overcome current problems experienced by many local governments" (Secondary Suites Policy Committee 1994, 1). The committee rejected the recommendations of the COHO report and suggested that the province adopt an enabling rather than directive role, amending the Municipal Act to provide municipal governments with the authority to register and license secondary suites in local bylaws. In order to encourage municipal "uptake", the report also recommended:

- provincial financial incentives to municipalities to encourage home owners to create secondary suites

- an educational campaign to increase acceptance for secondary suites among the general public.

By 1996, the provincial government had not acted on these recommendations.

Legislative changes to the Municipal Act will certainly allow municipalities to be more proactive in encouraging more compact development patterns, and it removes some of the most important legal restrictions on municipal action. It is important to note, however, that these changes to the Municipal Act are permissive only: they do not require that municipalities promote additional affordable housing or more compact development patterns. Furthermore, the main impact has been on the official community plan, which in BC is a general statement of the broad objectives and policies of the local government rather than a detailed land use instrument. Thus, there is no guarantee that changes wrought at the official community plan level will be translated into operational terms in neighbourhood plans and zoning bylaws. Nor does the legislation define key words such as "affordable", "rental housing" or "special needs". According to a ministry document, this is intentional: "the intent is to allow each community to respond, in its own way, reflecting local conditions and points of view" (BC Housing 1993, 1). This raises the question as to why provincial legislative changes are necessary in the first place, if municipal discretion is paramount. Finally, because the province does not have the power to approve or modify official plans in BC, it has few instruments with which to monitor and enforce municipal compliance with the legislative revisions.

Instead of more coercive policy instruments, the province is relying on improving the climate for affordable housing within municipalities. Toward this end, the province has developed an innovative educational program to help local governments address the issue of community resistance to affordable housing. Called "Towards Inclusive Neighbourhoods," the program includes information resources based on research, checklists on how to deal with neighbourhood groups and individuals, advice on media relations, and design suggestions that will reduce resistance to intensification projects.

2.4.3 Environmental Policies

Provincial policies regarding the remediation of soil prior to redevelopment of industrial sites for residential use are not considered to be a significant obstacle to intensification in the region. However, other environment standards have tended to discourage intensification. Health standards in particular were pinpointed as an issue. For instance, large lot requirements for septic systems produce rural estate developments at very low densities and discourage cluster development. There is a reluctance on the part of environmental regulators to relax standards in order to allow more intense development in rural areas. Furthermore, much of the province's budget for municipal infrastructure is spent on site-specific sewage and drinking water improvements that will help meet health standards, leaving no money for strategic infrastructure investment designed to influence the overall pattern of growth.

2.5 Metropolitan Planning Policies

This section describes the policy framework at the regional level, focusing on the development of regional institutions: the Lower Mainland Planning Regional Board and the Greater Vancouver Regional District. The regional role in the creation of affordable housing is also touched upon.

2.5.1 The Lower Mainland Regional Planning Board and the Greater Vancouver Regional District

The first steps toward formalized regional planning in Vancouver was taken in 1949 by the provincial Ministry of Municipal Affairs when it established the Lower Mainland Regional Planning Board (LMRPB) for the purpose of achieving a coordinated regional approach to development problems.[4] The LMRPB was established under provisions of the Municipal Act that allowed for contiguous local authorities in a metropolitan area to develop a joint landuse planning capacity. The Act specified that a plan would be binding on the constituent municipalities, but that it should be "a general scheme without detail for the projected use of land." The LMRPB plan was developed with extensive community and municipal government consultation. In 1966 it achieved the required approval of two-thirds of the 28 Lower Mainland municipalities, and thereby became official.

Because it could be used to criticize provincial land use and infrastructure investment decisions, the regional official plan quickly became a source of friction with the provincial government. With almost half the provincial population residing within the Board's jurisdiction, the provincial government decided that a decentralized administrative and planning system would be more desirable from a political point of view. The Board was

[4] In 1937, six municipalities in the Vancouver area voluntarily created a regional planning association, but this had no statutory basis.

dissolved in 1968 by the province and its functions were taken over by the four regional districts, including the GVRD, that had been created the previous year.[5]

The regional districts had been created across the province in order to consolidate the many special purpose boards that had grown up over the decades to deliver intermunicipal services. In the Vancouver area, these included a Joint Sewerage and Drainage Board, a Greater Vancouver Water District, various health and hospital boards, and an Industrial Development Commission of Greater Vancouver. The regional districts were relatively weak as upper-tier governments because their "directors" were indirectly elected from municipal councils, because member municipalities could opt out of many district functions, and because the districts lacked direct taxing power (Sancton 1994).

Having inherited the LMRPB's planning mandate, the GVRD set about producing a regional plan. After an elaborate consultation process and the widespread endorsement by municipal councils, the GVRD approved the Livable Region Plan in 1975. This plan set out a five-part strategy for managing growth in the region:

- population growth targets for each municipality in the region based on site analysis, i.e., setting aside farmland and recreation areas
- employment growth in each municipality to be balanced with population in order to reduce commuting, with the City of Vancouver slated to receive only 20 percent of new jobs in the region
- job growth directed to four regional town centres in (Burnaby Metrotown, Downtown New Westminster, Coquitlam Centre, and Whalley-Guilford)
- an improved, transit-oriented transportation system with rapid transit linking town centres, and measures to reduce car use
- an "Open Space Conservancy" made up of regional recreational lands, environmentally valuable lands, and hazardous lands (GVRD 1975).

In 1980, the Livable Region Plan was revised to encompass 19 second-order municipal town centres that had been designated in municipal planning documents, including one at Londsdale in North Vancouver, the City of Langley, Richmond, and Port Coquitlam. In 1985 two of these second-order centres—Lonsdale and Richmond—were upgraded to Regional Town Centre status adding to the original four regional town centres. The City of Langley has also applied to upgrade its regional centre to a regional town centre. If this occurs, there will be a total of seven regional town centres and 16 second-order centres in the GVRD and adjacent regions.

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[5] Originally called the Fraser Burrard Regional District.

By 1986, the Livable Region Plan aimed to create relatively self-contained communities: "a region of complete communities—livable cities in a sea of green." As it turned out however, the GVRD did not have the planning authority or control over public investment needed to implement this plan. Already weak as an upper-tier government, the GVRD's planning authority was further eroded in 1983 when a newly elected Social Credit government eliminated the planning powers of the regional districts, convinced that they were trespassing on municipal jurisdiction. Thus, the GVRD Official Regional Plan was dissolved and GVRD planning became advisory only, without statutory powers. Since then, regional planning in the GVRD has been carried on through voluntary agreements among the member municipalities.

Where the GVRD has had decision-making authority, it has not been used to effectively implement the regional plan. Although the regional government is responsible for providing infrastructure services that allow growth in the region, there is no evidence that it has used its decision-making powers over water and sewer and hospital investments to encourage more compact communities or to prevent sprawl up the Fraser Valley.[6] This outcome may reflect the GVRD's lack of independent and binding power over municipal land use decisions.

At the end of the 1980s, the GVRD embarked on an ambitious program to update the Livable Region Plan in response to changed conditions in the region. Preparation of the new plan involved an extensive consultation process with municipalities in the region and with the general public through conferences, workshops, public meetings, phone-in shows, cable televisions programs, questionnaires and written briefs. The result was *Creating Our Future*, which outlined the goals and values to serve as a basis for the new strategic plan (GVRD 1990). The document itemized 54 action items accepted by the GVRD as steps toward a more livable region.

The recommended actions covered a wide spectrum, reminiscent of the 1975 Livable Region Plan: maintaining a healthy environment, conserving the region's limited land resources, and creating a green zone. To this, it added economic development concerns. It also recommended that the GVRD "undertake, in consultation with municipalities and the provincial government, a review of the need for renewed GVRD regional land use, transportation and social development mandates" (GVRD 1990, 26).

In 1993, the GVRD released its proposals for managing growth in the region (GVRD 1993). The approach had four key features:

- it placed environmental values first, before the pressures for urban development
- for the first time in the GVRD, regional land use and transportation were planned together with the full involvement of the implementing authorities

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[6] Only once has the regional district refused to provide a water connection for a new suburban development, and then the issue was a fiscal one, unrelated to growth management policies.

- the plan covered the entire Lower Mainland of BC, including the Vancouver CMA and extending 125 kilometres from the City of Vancouver in the west to Chilliwack in the east, with a population of 1.78 million

- planning and implementation were done through partnership among regional, provincial and local governments rather than through a hierarchy of plans and regulations.

In December 1994, the GVRD directors approved in principle the Livable Region Strategic Plan to manage the region's growth to the year 2021. As part of the Livable Region Strategy, three distinct growth patterns were identified:

- the current trends, based on the growth anticipated in current community official plans, would place most of the urban growth in the region south of the Fraser River, outside the currently urbanized portion of the region

- the Fraser North option would shift growth to the north shore of the Fraser river

- the compact region option would focus urban growth within current urban areas.

The three options were compared against sixteen evaluative criteria, and, after some public consultation, the GVRD board selected the compact option as the basis for regional growth management in 1994. This option is consistent with the growth management goals pursued in the 1975 Livable Region Plan.

The density implications of the Livable Region Strategic Plan are significant. Within the "metropolitan focus area" (Vancouver, Burnaby, New Westminster, North Surrey, North Delta, and the North East Sector) the average density is currently nine units per hectare (uph). Densities are expected to increase to 15 uph, even without a strategic plan in place. If the regional strategic plan is realized, density will rise to 18 uph, a further 20 percent increase and very close to the current gross average density of the City of Vancouver.

Outside the metropolitan sub-area, densities will also increase, but to a lower level than they would have reached without a strategic plan. Diverting development away from this area will result in an average municipal density of 4.5 uph, compared to 6.0 uph if current trends were permitted to continue. However, lower municipal densities do not necessarily imply lower densities on a site-by-site basis. In fact, the plan foresees suburban housing development taking place on less land—with more land dedicated to farming, environmental, and recreational purposes—implying higher net densities than would result from current development trends.

The Livable Region Plan is careful to reassure the region's residents that achieving its growth management goals will not disrupt or drastically change the built form of their communities or their lifestyles. How then does the strategic plan envision growth management goals being translated into community form? The plan suggests a land use pattern based on "complete communities", a concept implied by the 1975 Livable Region Plan but not then explicitly stated.

Complete communities provide people with a greater range of the physical and social elements compared to a typical suburban community: houses, travel, workplaces, social contacts, public services, shops, and personal services. The region envisions them in existing communities of the urbanized portion of the region and in the existing valley towns and their edges. The concept is not meant to apply to isolated new towns that aim for self-containment beyond the urban fringe. Complete communities are meant to bring urban benefits to the suburbs: i.e., a diversity of services and facilities, and proximity to them via walking and transit.

One of the key feature of a complete community is the ratio of the number of jobs in a community to the size of the resident labour force. More complete communities increase the opportunities for people to work near their homes. To further this objective, the region's growth management strategy includes a set of employment goals that, if achieved, will address the jobs/housing imbalance of suburban areas within the GVRD.

The other key feature of complete communities is a more diversified housing stock than currently found in suburban locations of the region. Housing forms between the two extremes of single-detached houses and high-density apartment blocks—i.e., medium-density housing options such as townhouses, duplexes and small-lot homes—are more land and energy efficient than single-detached homes, without giving up privacy, a yard, and ground access.

Thus, more complete communities are more diverse and compact. Higher densities can support public transit, pedestrian or bicycle transportation, and reduce car use. With reduced car use, some of the 21 percent of the regional land surface dedicated to roads and parking can be turned over to residential use, further increasing community compactness.

The new Livable Region Plan carries forward the notion of a hierarchy of centres—including municipal town centres, regional town centres, and the metropolitan core (downtown Vancouver)—from the 1975 plan. The current Livable Region Plan incorporates all six town centres along with a number of second-order centres spread across the region.

The Green Zone is another principal component of the Livable Region Plan, an extension of the Open Space Conservancy concept from the 1975 plan. The Green Zone recommends the preservation of areas with great social or ecological value, e.g., open space, wetland, habitat, or resource land. The Green Zone includes the farmland in the Agricultural Land Reserve, publicly-owned parkland, environmentally sensitive areas protected by federal, provincial, or municipal regulation, and other lands identified by member municipalities within their boundaries. Therefore, long-term protection of these lands will depend on the coordinated action of a large number of government agencies. One result of the effective implementation of such policies would be the diversion of development pressure from the urban fringe into the already built up areas. About half the region's developable lowland area is in the Green Zone.

2.5.2 Housing Policies

The regional government does not involve itself in the regulation of housing development. It is active, however, in the direct provision of housing. The GVRD Housing Corporation is one of region's largest providers of rental accommodation, owning and managing 3,204 units in 47

projects across 10 municipalities in the region. About 30 percent of the tenants receive a rent subsidy and the remaining 70 percent pay rents comparable to low end market rates for similar accommodation. The majority of units are for families, handicapped and seniors. Projects tend to be at higher densities and are generally located in already built up areas.

2.6 Municipal Planning Policies

Municipal governments are exclusively responsible for zoning and official planning policies in the region. They therefore are the principal actors in issues related to housing intensification. Because recent growth management efforts at the regional level have not yet been implemented, most municipal initiatives have been undertaken independently of regional policies.

2.6.1 The City of Vancouver

It is possible to divide the history of growth politics in the City of Vancouver into two epochs (Ley, Hiebert, and Pratt 1992). In 1936, an election-at-large system replaced the ward system and ushered in the long era of pro-growth councils dominated by the Non-Partisan Association. Local politics became more controversial in the 1960s when significant anti-growth forces (counter-cultural segments and a rising middle class in downtown neighbourhoods) had combined to challenge city boosters and to slow growth.

The touchstone event was the "great freeway debate" of 1967. The root of the debate lay in the downtown plan of the mid-1950s, which envisioned the renewal of a vast residential area and a city-wide freeway network. In 1966, the province proposed a regional highway system, with one highway to go through Chinatown, near Vancouver's downtown area. Vancouver City Council and city planners fully supported the highway plan, but it was defeated by a coalition of community groups, which went on to defeat other urban renewal projects such as that planned for the Strathcona neighbourhood, adjacent to Chinatown, and Canadian Pacific Railway's proposal to demolish and redevelop Gastown, a neighbourhood with the oldest buildings in the city. These social forces—which aimed to preserve the built heritage of the city, resist rapid growth, and increase public participation in the planning process—coalesced into two municipal parties, the liberal Electors Action Movement (TEAM), a local political party that controlled city council from 1972-1978 and the social-democratic Committee of Progressive Electors (COPE), which held majorities between 1982 and 1986.

In the early 1970s, TEAM introduced a system of local area planning that gave a measure of planning power to neighbourhood committees. Combined with a shift in federal funding priorities from urban renewal to neighbourhood rehabilitation, this ensured that change in the built environment was more gradual, and that neighbourhood character was preserved. Design guidelines to ensure that social housing would fit into existing neighbourhoods checked high-rise developments.

In the early 1980s, however, things began to change. The city experienced major growth pressures emanating from the economic expansion of the region in general and the city in

particular, migration from other regions of Canada, and a massive increase in wealthy immigrants (and investment), especially from Hong Kong. This was accompanied by the moving of the baby boomers into household headship age and an increase in the number of single households within the city, a dramatic rise in housing prices and a reduction in rental availability, growing concern about the sprawling region, and the influx of commuters into the city. Together, these trends raised doubts about the feasibility and wisdom of a slow-growth preservationist orientation, and created pressure to increase the supply of multi-family units within the city. The resulting increase in density of some established neighbourhoods—such as Kitsilano where a number of condominium high-rises were built in the 1980s—brought the issue of uncontrolled intensification to the attention of city officials and the general public.

A series of planning reports on housing demand done by the city at the end of the 1980s noted the unprecedented demand for housing. Officials projected that 48,000 new apartments would be needed to meet the demand, more than doubling the existing stock of apartment units. In response, planning authorities and councillors began to look for ways to support new housing development in the city with minimal disruption to existing neighbourhoods.

The planning department suggested four components to its Housing Opportunity Strategy: up to half the required units could be built in "neighbourhood centres" located in existing single-family neighbourhoods near shopping districts; much of the remainder could be built on underused industrial land; some units could be built over shops on commercial streets; and other initiatives would be explored.

The neighbourhood centres initiative met with a stormy reception from some city councillors. To make room for 22,000 apartment units, it was estimated that 2000 single-family houses would have to be demolished. In 1991, council voted not to proceed with this initiative but to focus on the potential of industrial lands as a source of new housing supply that would have less impact on existing neighbourhoods (City of Vancouver 1991).

The redevelopment of industrial land has been a major source of intensification opportunities in the city. In the 15 years from 1975 to 1990, almost 300 hectares of industrial land were rezoned with about 680 hectares of industrial land remaining (DeMarco 1995). Over this period, the city did not have a policy on the rezoning of industrial land; thus the release of land occurred on a site-by-site basis, with no assurance that remaining lands would remain viable.

A 1990 report to council on the city's Industry Lands Strategy identified a surplus of industrial land, following which the city initiated a program entitled New Communities in Industrial Areas (City of Vancouver Planning Department 1990). By rezoning over 100 hectares of industrial land considered obsolete, the policy helped spur the redevelopment of areas such as the South East Shore of False Creek, Burrard Slopes, and the Joyce-Vanness area.

As this land was dezoned from the industrial inventory, concerns about the continued viability of industry in the regional core mounted. A more extensive study was undertaken of the city's remaining industrial lands and in 1995, city council passed a new Industrial Lands Strategy that would preserve industrial areas. Rezonings will only be considered in the context of a

city-initiated area plan. This should lead to a drop in speculation on industrial properties and reduced land values, which will further secure existing uses (DeMarco 1995).

The city has also undertaken large scale rezonings of commercial areas, allowing higher densities and a greater range of housing types. For instance, the Downtown South area has been rezoned from commercial to residential, allowing 2 million square metres of commercial property to be converted to housing. Likewise, the 1985 Central Area Plan provided for higher-density housing in the downtown area.

In 1989, the city initiated its Housing Above Shops program with the goal of increasing densities along the main streets where new housing will have minimal impact on adjacent neighbourhoods and where accessibility to public transit is high. The policy amended certain zoning bylaws (C-1 and C-2) to remove disincentives to building residential units in commercial zones. Such zones were found at neighbourhood intersections and along the higher-density arterials such as Dunbar, Main and Kingsway. The rezoning increased zoning capacity by 5,500 dwelling units in commercial districts outside the downtown. In the first three years after the restrictions were removed, 700 dwelling units had been approved or completed in 45 projects in these zones (Vancouver Planning Department 1992).

The city has adopted policies to permit the conversion of warehouse space to residential use in certain zones throughout the city. In 1987, there were an estimated 500-700 artist studio/lofts in the city, mostly illegal units in industrial areas adjacent to the downtown. A further 1,500 artists were thought to be in search of studio/lofts but were being frustrated by zoning and building regulations, and some artists had actually been evicted. The Artists' Live/Work Studio policy, announced in 1987, permitted artist studios in commercial, historic (such as Yaletown and Gastown) and industrial districts. The policy led to a relaxation of bylaws governing zoning, parking, building, and fire code requirements (City of Vancouver 1987). By 1995, 713 artist live/work studios had been built or were under construction, and a new round of zoning changes further reduced restrictions on such units (City of Vancouver 1995).

Adaptation of existing office buildings to residential use is also occurring in the city, with BC Hydro's historic headquarters being the most recent prominent example. Infill development is occurring on a regular and continuous basis in the city, but on a scale that is relatively small compared to other forms of intensification.

There are currently about 25-30,000 secondary suites in the city, most of which are illegal. The city has legalized such units in about half its residential areas. An extensive public consultation program was conducted, followed by referenda in each of the city's planning districts. However, strict building codes have deterred many home owners from adding or legalizing units, and it is not certain whether this policy initiative will substantially increase the total number of units in the city. Conversion of existing housing is also encouraged through "strata-titling", which allows a homeowner to create an additional ownership unit as long as it does not change the outer appearance of the building.

Transit facilities have also helped Vancouver and adjacent municipalities to crystallize intensification opportunities. SkyTrain stations, for instance, have served as nodal points

around which municipal secondary plans have been centred, allowing higher-density residential development. For instance, secondary plans around Joyce-Vanness and Broadway stations have permitted density increases and mixed-use development.

The city derives its authority from the Vancouver Charter, rather than the Municipal Act that governs the activities of other municipalities in the province. This allows the city to undertake a number of unique initiatives to increase affordable housing, including:

- using municipal land and a quasi-municipal housing corporation (VLC Properties) to encourage the intensification of large scale brownfield sites
- since 1988, requiring that major multi-family projects needing rezoning include 20 percent housing that is affordable to the core needy population[7]
- in 1989, promulgation of a series of guidelines to encourage the creation of housing affordable to families with children in high-rise projects
- density bonusing to encourage developers to create affordable housing.

The city has also implemented innovative programs using development cost charges: for instance, a charge of sixty dollars per metre has been levied on new development in Downtown South to help fund replacement housing for the low-rent units lost due to redevelopment in the area. In terms of direct housing provision, the city manages a portfolio of 1,150 dwellings of social housing, many for low income, single people living in the downtown core.

Vancouver is also unique in adopting its Clouds of Change policy, a detailed program of measures designed to reduce energy consumption and the generation of greenhouse gases. One of the key provisions of the policy document is "planning by proximity," which seeks to minimize the demand for movement thorough the convenient arrangement of land uses (City of Vancouver 1990). In adopting Clouds of Change, city council required that access by proximity be addressed in all major land use decisions, policy directions, and neighbourhood plans.

This survey suggests that the City of Vancouver has responded in a variety of ways in order to increase its supply of housing and reduce pressures for suburban development on the regional fringe. Of course, there are limitations to the city's intensification potential:

- constraints on new housing imposed by the shortage of amenities and services
- the need to preserve sufficient industrial land to support future employment requirements in the city and reduce commuting to out-of-city jobs

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[7] False Creek North was the first project to which this policy applied and 2,500 units of affordable are supposed to be created in this project alone.

- the continued single-family zoning of much of the city's land base
- local opposition to the variety of intensification options.

2.6.2 *Inner Suburban Areas*

For the purposes of this report, the "inner suburbs" are defined as those municipalities forming an arc around the City of Vancouver, incorporating Burnaby, New Westminster, the City of North Vancouver, the District of North Vancouver and West Vancouver. Other municipalities in the region are the "outer suburbs".

Although growth pressures may not be as strong as in the City of Vancouver, the inner suburbs have also undertaken meaningful steps to increase housing supply. In particular, existing or planned transit infrastructure has helped crystallize intensification efforts. In Burnaby, for instance, the municipality has planned for and implemented the redevelopment of Metrotown, a regional town centre on the SkyTrain route. In North Vancouver, the Lonsdale area is the site of much high-density development and the location of the SeaBus terminal. SkyTrain access has also stimulated major intensification activity in New Westminster's river front development, Westminster Quay. Finally, corridor redevelopment is an aspect of intensification efforts in the inner suburbs. For example, the land along Lougheed Highway in Burnaby will be intensified as a rapid transit corridor.

Some industrial land redevelopment is occurring in the mature suburbs. For instance, New Westminster has seen the redevelopment of industrial lands near the port area (North Arm and Queensborough). Plans for the development of new medium-density communities have been approved on provincially or federally owned lands, such as in Burnaby's Okalla prison site, New Westminster's prison site in Glenbrook South, or the Veteran's Hospital site in Burnaby.

Small-scale intensification has been encouraged through permitting the subdivision of residential lots and new development has been allowed using zero lot lines. Most mature suburbs are moving toward permitting secondary suites. The City of North Vancouver was one of the first municipalities in the province to sanction suites in owner-occupied homes. Burnaby allows secondary suites in single-family attached homes if the suite is to be occupied by a member of the primary occupant's immediate family.

New planning instruments are also being put in place in response to provincial reforms to the Municipal Act. Bonusing, which had been used for some time in the City of Vancouver, is now being considered or adopted in adjacent municipalities, such as North Vancouver. Affordable housing policies are also being incorporated into revised official community plans. In the District of North Vancouver, for instance, the official community plan has been revised to include the following goal:

> Provide housing opportunities to meet the changing needs of district residents at all stages of their lives by prov iding a balanced housing stock capable of meeting the needs of various age groups, family types, lifestyles and income groups.

The district is also leasing municipally-owned land to non-profit and co-operative housing sponsors at a cost of 75 percent of freehold market values.

Restrictions on intensification opportunities are prevalent in the more mature suburbs. Generally speaking, there is less industrial land redevelopment in the inner suburbs than in the City of Vancouver. Fewer original industrial sites and a higher percentage in active use have resulted in lower intensification potential. For instance, in North Vancouver, most of the original industrial land is still being used for industrial purposes related to the port (Beran 1994). Single-family zones are also more widespread and more impervious to intensification pressures. The lower concentration of major transit facilities also tends to reduce intensification opportunities in these municipalities.

2.6.3 Outer Suburban Areas

In the more rapidly growing, lower-density areas beyond the inner suburbs, the most common form of intensification is the planning and development of town centres, areas of higher-density mixed-use development with good links to the regional transit network. This town centre strategy allows agricultural land to be preserved while protecting single-family areas of the municipality by directing growth into specific higher-density areas. In Richmond, a town centre is being established by redeveloping a suburban area to a more urban use. It is anticipated that 80 percent of the population growth over the next 20 years will be accommodated in the Richmond Town Centre. Other town centres are under development in Delta, Port Moody, Coquitlam, and Surrey.

Town centres are often arranged in a hierarchy determined by the services offered and the level of transit facilities available. In Surrey, for instance, the Surrey City Centre is meant to have a regional function, whereas the smaller centres of Guilford, Newton, Fleetwood, and South Surrey are designed to serve as cores for the surrounding single-family neighbourhoods.

Some municipalities, such as Langley, Delta and Surrey, have undertaken studies and developed policies (e.g., through their official community plans) to preserve rural areas and direct a portion of new growth to already built up areas. In Surrey, for instance, growth management polices require that 75 percent of existing urban areas be built out before rural areas can be opened up for development. In Langley Township, a Rural Plan has been developed to encourage the preservation of agro-businesses by reducing land use conflicts and recognizing Agro-Service and Rural Commercial Centres. The plan introduces a development permit system to protect natural areas such as watercourses from inappropriate development. Delta has put in place its Farmland Wildlife Trust.

Many suburban communities are approving smaller lot sizes in new subdivision applications. Surrey, for instance, has approved one recent project (Parklane in Cloverdale) with lots of 9 metres wide and only 30 metres deep. Single detached housing of this size is roughly half the conventional standard, a reflection of the rising market for smaller, affordable units that are still ground-oriented and suitable for family living (*Globe and Mail* October 19, 1995, B10). A move toward more medium-density housing is also detectable in some suburban areas. In the Westwood Plateau and Burke Mountain areas of Coquitlam, for instance, clustered,

medium-density housing has allowed for the preservation of more woodlots and green space (Beran 1994). In Pitt Meadows, a mix of lot sizes and housing types is now encouraged. The R5 zone, for example, encourages a mix of up to 30 percent small lots with 12 metre frontages.

Some municipalities in the region are also allowing the subdivision of suburban lots into smaller lots under specific circumstances. In Richmond, the Single-Family Lot Size Study Process enables a neighbourhood to establish zoning that permits subdivision of already built-upon lots and provides all residents in the affected area with an opportunity to influence what single-family lot size policy should apply to their area for a five year period.

> In response to provincial housing legislation, municipalities have adopted policies that encourage the provision of housing for all groups and income levels. In 1994, Richmond adopted a housing policy requiring that 20 percent of new housing in the municipality should be affordable, and instituted a number of implementing instruments. These included provisions to lease municipally-owned land for social housing, a commitment to review zoning proposals with an eye for producing a wide range of housing types, and establishment of an Affordable Housing Fund that allows the municipality to initiate housing projects through land purchases or demonstration projects.

Despite the array of planning and policy initiatives to permit certain forms of intensification, municipalities in the outer suburbs have a wide variety of planning policies and regulations that discourage or prevent intensification from taking place. Many of the policies or regulations are designed to produce homogenous, single-use residential districts and to prevent other "incompatible" uses from arising. For instance, zoning bylaws set maximum density limits without specifying minimum density requirements. Subdivision and development control bylaws set minimum road and servicing requirements that make intensification difficult. Some municipalities in the region, committed to preserving a low-density lifestyle, have adopted master zoning bylaws that forbid medium- or high-density housing of any kind. This is the case in the villages of Belcarra and Annmore, about a half hour's drive from downtown Vancouver.

Municipalities in the outer suburbs are less likely to permit secondary suites than those in more mature areas. In Coquitlam and Richmond, for instance, such suites are illegal, although officers only enforce local bylaws in the case of complaints. In Surrey, secondary suites have been legalized through spot or area rezoning where it was acceptable to residents, but this has been limited. Where illegal, the city is intent on eliminating such suites (Beran 1994). Other municipalities have zoning regulations prohibiting secondary suites in certain areas or throughout the municipality.

As the provincial government has reduced transfer payments for infrastructure, municipal governments in the region have moved toward development charges. As noted above, such charges have been used in Vancouver to cover both hard and soft services such as day care, replacement housing, and libraries. But suburban municipalities tend to have the lowest development charges, thereby contributing to sprawl. Furthermore, because development charges are assessed on the basis of housing type rather than floor area, there is no incentive

for the developer to build smaller units. Finally, there is no benefit for the developer to build close to existing services because development charges are calculated by municipalities on an average rather than marginal cost basis.

2.6.4 Town Centres

The foregoing review of municipal planning policies shows that the town centres concept is a focal point of intensification efforts in both the inner and outer suburbs of the region. As already noted, the town centres concept was proposed by the 1975 Livable Region Plan and carried forward into the 1994 Livable Region Strategic Plan for the GVRD. A review of the municipal planning response to the provisions of the 1975 plan will illustrate some of the problems in coordinating municipal planning in the absence of a strong regional planning authority.

The concept of the town centre is politically attractive in the region because of its potential to allow for population growth while preserving farmland and avoiding the disruption of existing neighbourhoods. If the concept were successfully implemented, it would allow the region to balance population and job opportunities, reduce the need for commuting, and encourage rapid transit improvement. The 1975 Livable Region Plan provided very detailed guidelines to municipalities in the design and functioning of the town centres:

- A strong pedestrian orientation. Activities and facilities should be within comfortable walking distance of one another.

- A widely varied but balanced mixture of activities. The centre should be alive with many different activities from morning to night. It should not be dominated by one activity, such as office parks or shopping centres.

- A human scale. Buildings should not give people a 'boxed-in' feeling and should not block the sun or view.

The plan also set up some quantifiable guidelines on minimum office space, dwelling units and maximum land coverage necessary to achieve the intensity required for a vibrant mix of uses.

After the statutory planning powers of the GVRD were removed in 1983, planning expression of the town centre concept relied entirely on local municipal plans. All regional town centres have been incorporated into official community plans, including those designated after 1983. This attests to the level of voluntary planning cooperation between the GVRD and its member municipalities.

Nonetheless, questions have been raised about the economic and planning feasibility of the concept. As one interviewee said:

> The myth is that these are town centres, but I think a lot are not. They're glorified shopping centres, a sea of parking, a shopping centre and residential towers... There are all these other amenities that have to go along with the community if we are going to call it a town centre.

Doubts have been raised concerning the ability of each of a large number of town centres to create the "gravitational pull" to attract sufficient development and to act as a counterbalance to the Vancouver core. A GVRD report found that the total commercial development capacity of the six regional centres was over 80 million square feet, or about a third more than the total commercial development capacity in downtown Vancouver. A related issue is the concern that the province cannot afford to build all the rapid transit lines that would be necessary to fully support the designated centres.

Other concerns about town centres have also been voiced. In some cases, the town centres that have been designated are spatially too big to concentrate development. While the 1975 Livable Region Plan had called for a maximum area of 250 hectares and a commercial core of 20 hectares, none of the official community plans respected this crucial feature. The deviation from the Livable Region Plan standard is worst in the outer suburbs: the Langley centre is 900 hectares with a commercial core of 200 hectares, Surrey has a total area of 400 hectares and a core of 85 hectares, Richmond's official community plan designates a town centre over 440 hectares with a core of 110 hectares.

Not only are the official community plan-designated centres much more spread out than anticipated by the Livable Region Plan, but they are at relatively low densities. Compared to the metropolitan core, where commercial buildings are permitted up to a floor area ratio of 9.0, regional town centres have maximum densities of between 2.5 to 5.2, with an average of 3.6.

Although the Livable Region Plan envisioned them as vibrant, pedestrian-friendly, with a finely grained mix of uses, there is some doubt whether the town centres that are actually emerging make attractive locations. In Burnaby, for instance, Metrotown has been widely disparaged as an undistinguished suburban shopping centre that is far from pedestrian-friendly.

An important feature of the Livable Region Plan was that regional town centres should have a complete range of institutions, community facilities, and recreational amenities in order to attract new residents, reduce commuting and take pressure off the metropolitan core. A 1993 study showed that regional town centres had an average of only ten of the 20 types of community facilities (such as libraries, college campuses, and hospitals) required to create a true regional centre (GVRD 1993b).

A final point: while it is true that municipal official community plans have designated town centres in their plans, they may also be adopting other policies that will undermine the realization of centres as envisioned by the Livable Region Plan. In particular, designation of industrial and business parks in various suburban municipalities is draining off employment growth into single-use, car-dependent locations: employment that might otherwise have supported town centres. For instance, commercial floorspace increased in regional town centres by about 4 million square feet between 1980 and 1990, but about 22 million square feet of commercial floor space was developed in dispersed locations outside of regional town centres (GVRD 1993).

2.6.5 Population Growth

Another key feature of both the 1975 Livable Region Plan and the 1994 Livable Region Strategic Plan has been the effort to direct population growth. A review of actual development trends compared to the 1975 targets will provide some insight into the effectiveness of earlier regional planning efforts.

The plan divided the region (smaller at that time because the Langleys had not yet joined) into nine sub-areas, and targeted growth for each based on 13 weighted criteria. In setting the targets, most weight given to:

- preserving farmland
- respecting municipal views on maximum feasible densities
- promoting development near public transit
- discouraging development in areas having open space, conservation, recreation values
- promoting development around regional town centres.

As Table 2-2 shows, the population distribution targets that emerged from this process would have resulted in a development pattern for 1976-1986 somewhat different from trend projections:

- growth on the southern periphery of the region would have been checked
- almost half the expected growth would have been directed to the Burrard Peninsula and Richmond
- the remaining growth would have been directed to the northeast sector.

The actual 1986 Census figures in Table 2-2 show that the growth targets set out in the 1975 plan went largely unmet. First of all, the area studied (smaller than the current GVRD) experienced a much smaller rate of growth than anticipated by the Livable Region Plan. The population in 1986 was only 231,270 greater than in 1971, rather than the 449,990 that was predicted. Some of the predicted growth did take place in the region, but outside the GVRD of the day, for instance in Langley City, Langley Township and Pitt Meadows. This implies more sprawl in exactly the direction that the plan attempted to avoid, i.e., on the south shore of the Fraser up the valley. Secondly, the plan was hoping to steer 31 percent of new growth into the Burrard Peninsula, but only 10 percent actually materialized. Attempts to reduce growth in the Surrey-Delta area were also unsuccessful.

Table 2-2: Population Targets and Actual Growth

	1971 Census	1986 Trend	% Total Growth	1986 Target	% Total Growth	1986 Census	% Total Growth
Vancouver	429940	474455	9.9	489500	13.2	434752	2.1
Burnaby - New Westminster	168495	226070	12.8	248500	17.8	185133	7.2
North Shore	127115	182245	12.3	167000	8.9	140205	5.7
Northeast Sector	84560	159600	16.7	154500	15.5	115054	13.2
Richmond	62130	120700	13.0	130000	15.1	108492	20.0
Delta	45935	98000	11.6	77500	7.0	79610	14.6
Surrey-White Rock	108860	214630	23.5	209200	22.3	195834	37.6
GVRD	2,027,810	1,477,800	100.0	1,477,800	100.0	1,259,080	100.0

2.7 Recent Initiatives and Current Challenges

2.7.1 Planning on a Metropolitan Scale

Regional planning has emerged as a controversial issue in the study area and important policy initiatives have been undertaken to address the issues raised.

2.7.1.1 Municipal Reaction to the 1994 Livable Region Strategic Plan

In terms of regional growth management, the most controversial issue is the distribution of regional population and employment growth. As mentioned above, the Livable Region Strategic Plan envisions the concentration of population growth in the core and inner suburban areas in order to avoid further sprawl up the Fraser valley. If these goals are to be achieved, they will need to be expressed in terms of population and housing targets embedded in official community plans and replace current projections based on existing trends.

The City of Vancouver, which provided leadership in the GVRD's strategic planning initiative and appears to be supportive of the general concept, is one of the few municipalities that have progressed to this point. Its new CityPlan endorsed the population growth aspects of the regional plan, even though it will mean an acceleration of intensification efforts within the city. The projections require an additional 97,000 households before 2021 (13,000 more households than the trend projections) and 164,000 additional people (45,000 more than trend projections). This increase is equivalent to the combined residential population of the West End (the densest urban area in the country) and the Downtown.

CityPlan was less receptive to the employment implications of the regional plan. It rejected the employment growth projections of 152,000 additional jobs (41,000 more than trend projections), on the grounds that it would lead to more commuting into the city and congestion of city streets, a major political issue in the city. In order to help address the commuting issue, CityPlan accepts the need for two more rapid transit lines (from Richmond and along Broadway to Burnaby/Coquitlam) into the city centre (City of Vancouver 1995).

Few other municipalities in the region have undertaken official plan reviews that would reveal whether or not regional growth management targets were being operationalized at this level. However, many municipalities have responded informally to the implications of the Livable Region Plan for their own growth and development plans.

Burnaby is one municipality that is slated by the regional plan to undergo much greater growth than would otherwise be the case: the population was to increase from 158,000 in 1991 to 278,400 by 2021, requiring 119,600 housing units. The city's existing official community plan provided for a population capacity of 180,000 living in 77,700 dwelling units. There is therefore a shortfall of about 42,000 units between the GVRD's 2021 target figure for Burnaby and the dwelling unit capacity as defined in the city's plan. After reviewing its intensification options, the city concluded that it would not be able to meet regional housing goals unless a very significant provincial investment were made in a rapid transit link to the municipality. Even then, the city could reach a capacity of only 110,000 housing units (City of Burnaby 1994).

In many rapidly growing suburban municipalities, such as Richmond, Delta, and Surrey, there is some political support for regional growth management goals because these municipalities bear many of the significant environmental costs associated with sprawl: e.g., traffic congestion as commuters pass through the inner suburbs on their way to and from employment in the central city. They would also stand to see higher growth rates and more provincial infrastructural investment if population were directed away from fringe development up the Fraser Valley. Support for the plan is strongest among local politicians that are involved with the GVRD. The Mayors of Surrey, Richmond and Delta are on record as supportive of the GVRD growth management goals.

Other local politicians, apprehensive about how the growth management goals will be translated into development on the ground, are less enthusiastic. In March of 1994, for instance, the Surrey council considered the GVRD population allocation for the northern portion of Surrey, where Whalley Town Centre is located. The GVRD plan called for a dramatic increase in the population growth over municipal projections.[8] Surrey's general manager of planning warned council that accommodating a population increase of this

[8] The population of north Surrey is currently at about 197,000. Municipal planners anticipated another 163,000 people for a population of 360,000 by the year 2021. The regional plan allocated 343,000 more people for a 2021 population of 540,000. Thus, the regional plan more than doubled the expected population growth for the area.

magnitude would require vacant land in the area to be developed at 75 or more units per hectare, typical of three-storey apartment buildings.

Given this information, Council voted to reject the GVRD vision, at least partially on the grounds that it entailed unacceptably high densities on the remaining vacant land within the municipality and was out of step with the projected demands for ground-oriented housing. Because Surrey was expected to accept the lion's share of regional growth, this decision threw the Livable Region Plan into question.

In the outer municipalities, such as in Matsqui, the regional growth management plan seems to be equally controversial. The reduced growth rates for fringe municipalities are supported by those councillors and political forces that would like to minimize growth and its negative consequences, and by many residents. Other councillors and developers fear that diverting population to the regional core and inner suburbs will undermine their growth aspirations, reduce the property values of greenfield lands on which development is delayed, increase the price of existing housing, possibly lead to a long-term increase in the local unemployment rate, and discourage provincial funding for transportation and other infrastructure development in their vicinity. As one interviewee said:

> we would have to do extensive down zoning and that would result in a loss of investment, jobs and in turn, a loss of property values. There would be hell to pay for that. If this is something we wanted to do we should never have upzoned the land in the first place. Also with low population projections, we felt we would never get rapid transit through here.

The regional plan does not foresee much growth for the municipalities on the north shore of Burrard inlet. Here, a general consensus seems to have arisen that low growth rates are preferable and that the single-family character of the area should be preserved.

The GVRD has helped identify the key values and aspiration of residents of the region (e.g., environmental protection and the maintenance of the quality of life) and showed that these could not be maintained by continuing with existing development patterns. It has also generated research activity and policy options for managing growth in the area, and has facilitated consensus among its constituent municipalities with regard to a regional land use vision. However, the reaction from municipal politicians has raised doubts about the feasibility of implementing the strategic plan. In particular, doubt has been expressed about the ability of the GVRD to direct growth to the central area of the region and divert it away from the outlying areas. With no legislative planning power, the GVRD is not well placed to overcome resistance from suburban municipalities that have rejected their growth allocations.

In 1993, the GVRD proposed an amendment to the Municipal Act that would give it the authority to impose its growth management plans on member municipalities by requiring official community plans to conform to GVRD goals. A backlash from some municipal councillors in the region—who claimed that the proposal represented a "power grab"—led the GVRD Board to withdraw its proposal in favour of a continuation of the partnership model.

In fact, suburban municipalities have succeeded in modifying the Livable Region Strategy in a way that permits more development in suburban areas on the fringes of the regional core and up the Fraser Valley while lowering the targets for growth concentration in central areas. The target population for the metropolitan focus area has been reduced from 1,972,300 to 1,832,000, a 35 percent drop in the policy-led growth for the area (GVRD, Jan 1995). The new targets represent a compromise between the GVRD vision for the region and the pre-existing community plans, which were in turn based on market forecasts of housing demand.

Table 2-3: Growth Projections for the Metropolitan Focus Area

Projection	Population of Metropolitan Focus Area
Actual 1991	1,050,200
2021 Current Trends	1,568,500
2021 Original Plan	1,972,300
2021 Modified Plan	1,832,000

At the moment, the Livable Region Strategy has voluntary status only: municipalities may follow the population growth allocations and land use implications of the proposed regional structure or they may ignore them. The same is true of the Green Zone concept, which relies entirely on the willingness of member municipalities to identify and protect ecologically sensitive areas, recreation lands and renewable resources. The general impression gathered from interviews and newspaper articles is that municipalities may be following their own development paths, regardless of regional planning efforts. For instance, the emerging regional centres may reflect municipal growth management priorities rather than any strategic regional plan. And according to at least one observer of the region scene, the member municipalities "ignore the regional council's directions and continue to approve urban sprawl" (*Globe and Mail* July 11, 1995, A6).

There is wide agreement that the current structure of regional planning, relying on a partnership between municipal and regional government, has served the region fairly well in building support for the need for growth management.[9] However, there is serious doubt about its ability to implement the regional land use and transportation objectives in the face of recalcitrant municipalities and neighbourhood groups trying to preserve existing conditions.

[9] This was reflected in the interviews conducted for this report: except for labour, all interviewees had been directly involved in the regional planning process and generally agreed with the outcome.

2.7.1.2 Growth Strategies Act

The province has attempted to strengthen regional planning institutions in BC through the adoption of the Growth Strategies Act (1995). Taking the form of amendments to the Municipal Act, the Growth Strategies Act provides legislative authority for regional growth management strategies. It requires consistency between regional and municipal plans, using a "cross-acceptance process." The new legislation outlines a variety of dispute resolution mechanisms and casts the province as a facilitator in a system of dispute arbitration.

The Growth Strategies Act ensures the creation and adoption of a regional plan with a high degree of support among member municipalities. It also guarantees that municipal plans will be consistent with regional strategies by requiring each member municipality to prepare a "regional context statement" showing how the official community plan is—or will be made—consistent with the regional plan. It directs regional districts to consider fourteen provincially-defined goals, such as avoiding urban sprawl, encouraging settlement patterns that minimize automobile use, and providing adequate and affordable housing.

As part of its implementation efforts, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing has established a Growth Strategies Office. Through this office, the Ministry will coordinate the input of all provincial ministries to ensure that provincial interests are addressed during the development of a regional growth strategy. Agreements are struck between the office and the GVRD in order to identify areas of cooperation needed to implement the strategy. The Act also requires the GVRD to review its growth strategy every five years, providing an opportunity to address shortcomings and implement problems associated with the original strategy.

While very promising, the Growth Strategies legislation has come under criticism from intensification advocates. The Agricultural Land Commission, for instance, has pointed out that the Act does not provide real provincial policy leadership and leaves the regional planning process with considerable uncertainty as to outcome. Nor does it include strong measures to ensure support from provincial agencies for regional plans (Planning Institute of BC News March 1995, 19).

The amendments have also been criticized for failing to give regional governments any leverage over member municipalities in implementing the plan: "The similarities of these proposals to what is in place in Oregon and Washington is striking, but with the important difference that municipal funding in those jurisdictions is tied to participation in an agreed and approved regional plan" (Murchie 1995, 10).

2.7.1.3 Support for Regional Solutions

The outcome of recent regional planning efforts and legislative changes will depend partially on the support among stakeholders and the public for regional solutions. In fact, there are some strong forces contributing to an awareness of metropolitan-wide problems and the linked nature of their solution.

Developers are a strong force in favour of growth management in the region. Developers and builders are concerned that a public backlash against rapid population growth and its side effects will result in the election of slow-growth (or no-growth) councils that will discourage new development within their jurisdictions (Urban Development Institute 1991, 4). An anti-growth sentiment has arisen in Victoria and at least some members of the Urban Development Institute believe that it has stopped growth there. The industry perceives the move toward more compact communities as a strategy for maintaining the growth potential of the region while minimizing the associated environmental and fiscal costs, and therefore heading off any anti-growth sentiments that may arise. Secondly, the industry is concerned about the limited supply of developable land for single-family housing in the region. Growth management is seen as a means of ensuring an adequate supply of serviced land.

This favourable attitude toward growth management does not mean, however, that the development industry would support policies restricting greenfield development on the urban fringe. In fact, according to one provincial official, the Home Builders Association "wants to bring back the 1950s. They want to open up the land supply and stomp on municipalities so that they get more land [for low-density greenfield development]." This reflects the fact that many builders in the region are family firms that depend on the small-scale building of detached housing.

The ALC has itself been a consistent voice in favour of region-wide solutions to problems associated with growth and urbanization. It strongly favours more compact communities in the GVRD. Not only does it publish a newsletter that regularly advocates urban containment, it has organized several conferences on the need to preserve agricultural land, and has conducted and publicized studies on the availability of intensification opportunities in the region (ALC 1990). It has striven against the notion that agricultural land is simply a holding zone for future urban uses. Its general orientation is consistent with that of the Livable Region Strategy and the growth management objectives that have emerged from the GVRD.

One should not conclude from this, however, that the farming community is unanimously "on side" with the ALC. In fact, the BC Feed Growers Association and the BC Federation of Agriculture both have standing resolutions that the Agricultural Land Reserve should be dismantled. Their position is that farming is being undermined as an economic activity due to free trade, more stringent environmental regulations, and cutbacks in federal support for agricultural industry. They see agricultural land protection policies as unwarranted constraints on their right to sell their land to the highest bidder.

The Georgia Basin Initiative (GBI) is a provincial program that has helped to build awareness of regional growth management issues in the GVRD. The Georgia Basin is the BC portion of a larger bioregional unit formed by the watersheds that drain into the Strait of Georgia and the Strait of Juan de Fuca and Puget Sound in Washington State. This area encompasses the entire GVRD, extends north to Powell River and east to Hope on the mainland, and includes Victoria and up to Campbell River on Vancouver Island. In 1992, the provincial government asked the BC Round Table on the Environment and the Economy to develop proposals for addressing growth management in the bioregion, resulting in the creation of the GBI. The central goal of the initiative is to promote a sustainable future for the basin through

partnership and consultation with other governments, non-government organizations, and the private sector.

In its literature, the GBI has identified rapid population growth and urban sprawl as key threats to sustainability in the bioregion (British Columbia Round Table on the Environment and Economy 1993). In early 1996, the GBI released a vision statement. The first of its eight guiding principles is "compact and complete communities," to be achieved through infill and redevelopment. The Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, which now houses the GBI, is actively promoting the vision statement.

The Fraser Basin is the watershed within the Georgia Basin that incorporates the GVRD. The Fraser Basin Management Board (FBMB) and the associated Program is another government initiative that is helping to raise awareness of issues related to sprawl in the Vancouver region. The FBMB is one of the few institutions in North America that is based on ecological boundaries and has an explicit sustainability orientation encompassing social, ecological and economic dimensions. The board, created in the summer of 1992, consists of a unique range of stakeholders: three members each from federal, provincial, municipal and First Nations bodies, and six members from non-government organizations or the public at large. Recently, the FBMP published a "State of the Fraser Basin" report which identified urban growth and sprawl as the key challenge facing the sustainability of the basin. The report recommended that a monitoring system be established to assess progress toward urban containment and environmental protection (FBMP 1996) .

Clearly, there are a large number of government initiatives that have tied urban sustainability in general, and environmental issues in particular, to regional growth patterns. These initiatives are providing a vehicle for citizen groups to involve themselves in issues related to urban growth management. This growing awareness of the link between urbanization and sustainability represents a shift from the traditional focus of environmental groups in the region on wilderness preservation and resource issues.

New groups have emerged concerned with urban sustainability, such as the Georgia Strait Alliance, and a number of important conferences have recently drawn attention to issues of sustainable urban development. For instance, a conference on "Greening Our Cities" that took place in Vancouver in 1994, brought together a range of academics, activists and planners with the aim of building a greater awareness of the relationship between urbanization and environmental quality. Other conferences that have been held in Vancouver recently include "Sustainability, its Time for Action," and "Monitoring for Sustainability": both of these have helped build awareness and support for growth management and intensification proposals.

Some environmental groups in the region are critical of the notion of "managing" further growth and believe that the carrying capacity of the area has already been exceeded. Their position is that growth should be redirected to other regions of the province. Groups dedicated to the preservation of specific natural features, such as local creeks, are likely to fall into this group, perceiving intensification of certain areas of the region as a further source of stress.

The Social Planning and Research Council is in favour of strong regional institutions as long as they remain sensitive to community concerns. The council believes that many social issues, such as the provision of affordable housing and accessible services, have to be dealt with at the regional level and has involved itself somewhat in the social planning aspects of the regional planning process. A number of housing advocacy associations have also promoted intensification and secondary suites as a means to achieve affordable housing goals. These include the Lower Mainland Tenants Rights Action Coalition. Labour unions in the area have not taken noticeable stands on the importance of regional institutions.

While many interests in the region believe that regional planning authority must be increased, some have pointed out the need for a parallel enhancement in citizen participation in the regional planning process and governance. Community Steps, a coalition of community groups, supports greater regional planning powers but believes this must be complemented by increased responsibility of grass-roots groups. A number of proposals have come forward, including a formal role for citizen groups in regional planning matters and local development control.

This will undoubtedly present a major challenge to political and community leaders in the region in the coming years. Will an increased role for citizen organizations lead to a greater willingness to accept political compromises and solutions that may be difficult to tolerate at a local level but are equitable from a regional perspective? For instance, will local organizations accept the need for affordable housing in all communities of the region?

Although many planners fear that a greater role for citizens in the planning process will undermine growth management and intensification goals, there is some evidence to the contrary. For instance, a study done in 1993 suggested that area residents in a Vancouver neighbourhood that had been fighting a series of intensification projects were willing to see their neighbourhood change, as long as they weren't ignored in the process.

We have seen that there are a number of organizations in the Vancouver region that are organized on a regional scale and that favour regional planning and growth management. But this should not lead us into thinking that there is an established coalition of interests collectively promoting intensification policies in the region. This contrasts with the situation in some US urban regions, such as Portland or San Francisco, where alliances have been developed among environmentalists, developers and social equity groups in favour of growth management. In the Vancouver region, the environmental movement is only beginning to exert pressure for regional growth management, but we have seen that developers do not speak with one voice on this issue either. And because of the absence of any policy link between intensification and affordable housing, even housing and social equity activists are ambivalent on the issue and may favour neighbourhood stability over change.

2.7.2 Linking Land Use and Transportation Planning

Transportation planning in the Vancouver area has never been a regional responsibility (Frisken 1994b). Before the creation of the GVRD, transit planning and operation were done by BC Electric, a private company, and then by BC Hydro, the provincial utility that bought

BC Electric. Neither agency was a strong promoter of transit development in the region, and provincial energies were devoted to highway development.

Regional transportation and transit planning were not functions assigned to the GVRD when it was created in 1967. Over the next few years, the district struggled with the province to have some authority devolved to the regional level. The conflict over regional control centred on responsibility for funding the system. GVRD directors did not want to pay for the shortfall in operating costs out of property taxes, while the province wanted to limit its financial involvement at a time of rapidly increasing transit costs. Without any agreement, a series of provincial agencies continued to plan, fund and operate transit in the region.

For instance, the 1979 decision to build the SkyTrain was unilaterally taken by the province, as was the choice of technology and route: objections from the GVRD were ignored. Although the province's primary motivations were linked to serving the Expo '86, creating jobs and attracting federal funding, the route chosen also helped fulfill the town centre concept of the 1975 Livable Region Plan by connecting Vancouver, Burnaby, and New Westminster.

In 1978, the province created the Urban Transit Authority to take over transit services administered by BC Hydro in the Vancouver and Victoria regions. At the same time, the province offered municipalities the right to establish a special property tax to raise funds for transit. Alternately, they could ask cabinet to impose a special levy on electricity use or a special tax on gasoline within a transit service area. The GVRD chose to ask the province for both special levies. In 1983, the province created the GVRD Transit Commission, comprised of provincially-appointed local mayors and aldermen, but it had little real responsibility.

In 1988, the Social Credit government undertook a regional transportation planning exercise. The study was to report on short term priorities and develop a 2001 transportation plan, but a crucial study of the impacts of alternative land use scenarios on transportation networks was put off until "Phase II" of the study, which the Social Credit government never undertook. The short term planning report recommended that $855 million be spent by 1996 on new roads and road extensions and improvements, while only $640 million be spent on transit over the same period.

In 1989, the Social Credit government announced a major transit improvement strategy for the region: a SeaBus link across Burrard Inlet, a $1 billion SkyTrain extension across the Fraser River into Surrey (the constituency of the Minister of Municipal Affairs) and a new $750 million SkyTrain link into Richmond (the Premier's constituency). The plan violated the transit investment priorities set by the GVRD in the realization of its Livable Region Plan: the marine link had never been considered by the GVRD, and the Surrey and Richmond SkyTrain links were lower in priority than a Coquitlam line, which was not included in the funding package.

With the current round of strategic planning in the region, GVRD authorities appear to be better integrated into the transportation planning process, creating the potential for a better link between land use and transportation planning. Transport 2021 is a medium- and long-

range transportation plan being developed in parallel with the Livable Region Strategic Plan. It is a co-operative project conducted by a committee made up of representatives from the Ministry of Transportation and Highways, the Ministry of Economic Development, Small Business and Trade, BC Transit, BC Ferries, municipalities, and GVRD staff.

The plan calls for the use of four policy instruments to reduce automobile dependence in the region and reverse urban sprawl: land use controls, demand management, adjusting service levels, and increasing transport capacity (GVRD 1993). By way of coordinating government action, the plan calls for agencies of the provincial government (notably BC Transit and the Ministry of Transportation and Highways) and local governments to coordinate transportation policies and investments in infrastructure so as to serve, and help create, the more compact region.

The plan also foresees the need for a number of capital improvements to the transport system, including high quality transit service linking regional town centres, and improved transit service in more densely developed areas of the region. Both of these measures would provide significant support and incentive for the realization of the Livable Region Strategy.

Demand management is another major aspect of the plan. It proposes a variety of instruments, such as tolls on bridges coming into Vancouver, road pricing, a gas tax, and disincentives to employers who offer free parking. These measures would encourage population growth in the central area rather than in auto-based developments on the urban fringe.

One challenge facing the realization of Transport 2021 is strong resistance offered by motorists to demand management techniques: bridge tolls and fuel taxes are very unpopular with commuters in the region. In contrast, many citizens appear to be ready to give up the automobile in favour of public transit: a GVRD poll conducted in 1994 showed that 91 percent of residents would prefer to work in their home communities, and that 80 percent would reduce auto use if they had access to efficient transit. These observations suggest the importance of the Transport 2021 exercise in placing more emphasis on the integration between land use and transportation planning, and on increased investment in public transit.

Unfortunately, some signs indicate that tensions between the regional planning needs of the GVRD and provincial investment decisions are still alive. The decision by the provincial government to support a rapid transit route through Vancouver and Burnaby was denounced by regional planners and the chair of the regional council: the route "doesn't bear much relevance to regional planning and trying to shape growth," Gregg Halsey-Brandt claimed (*Globe and Mail* July 11, 1995, A6). In interviews, others have pointed out that only a few months before the release of Transport 2021, the Ministry let two contracts for studies for new freeways (including a border freeway) "which fly in the face of everything that is being called for in the GVRD strategy and Transport 2021, i.e., the call for more compact urban development. This proposal will open up the south side of the river, which the strategy says we shouldn't be doing."

2.7.3 Building Support for Housing Intensification at the Local Level

2.7.3.1 Regional Core

Intensification is a major issue in the City of Vancouver due to the immense growth pressures being experienced in the area, the gradual transformation of whole neighbourhoods through higher-density development, and the spillover effects of major housing development projects on adjacent areas.

Almost every type of intensification has received some public objection in the city:

- the redevelopment of industrial lands are objected to by labour unions, adjacent residents and remaining industries
- residents in adjacent low-density neighbourhoods have objected to the rezoning of commercial areas to permit residential development such as over shops
- permitting basement apartments in certain neighbourhoods has been controversial and in other neighbourhoods has been outright rejected.

Because of the limited land base in the region, and high land prices, pressures for the intensification of the regional core are immense. While the redevelopment of industrial land has provided some relief, this source of intensification opportunity is being curtailed through policy choices. Because single-family areas comprise such a large proportion of the city's land area, developers are expected to turn their attention even more forcefully to the intensification of established neighbourhoods.

Thus, conflicts with residents of lower-density neighbourhoods are likely to become more frequent and intense as existing residents struggle to protect the character of their neighbourhoods. These neighbourhoods are well organized and have a history of resisting intensification efforts that threaten neighbourhood character or overwhelm a neighbourhood with a high rate of change. "Neighbourhood character" may refer to the physical character of neighbourhoods or their social makeup, but in both cases reflects a desire by residents to protect existing neighbourhood values.

Other concerns expressed by area residents toward intensification projects are: increased traffic through the neighbourhood; over-use of local amenities such as parks; poor site design, loss of heritage through demolition; loss of green space through infill; loss of surrounding property values; obstruction of views; and fears that the general livability of the area will be reduced. Residents were also concerned about the increased stress that intensification projects would have on local services such as schools and daycares. Another pervasive concern is the impact of intensification on adjacent property values. Finally, some residents appear to worry that by allowing increased density in their neighborhoods, they are inviting crime, vandalism and social problems because of crowding and an influx of people from different socio-economic backgrounds.

Managing these conflicts will be a major challenge to municipal planning authorities in the region. How they are resolved will determine to some extent whether the region achieves its growth management objectives.

A frequently made observation in the region is that the public is opposed to both higher density in their own neighbourhoods and to urban sprawl. Many interviewees reflected on this contradiction and suggested the need for improved public understanding of the relationship between the two phenomenon. That is, if people want a more efficient urban system, then some intensification of the urban fabric will be required.

The City of Vancouver has gone the furthest in the region in engendering such an understanding. Extensive consultation over the new official community plan including a highly successful "ideas fair", referenda on secondary suites, neighbourhood committees with an advisory capacity to the city planning department, and a number of other participatory mechanisms have been implemented partially in order to help address resident concerns over neighbourhood and city-wide change.

These consultation mechanisms have permitted the city to present realistic alternatives to its residents. For example, when confronted with the choice between increased traffic congestion from suburban commuters or allowing more residential growth in their districts, citizens are likely to choose the latter. And when asked if they would prefer to preserve their own districts at the expense of preserving industrial employment lands, they chose to allow neighbourhood changes that preserve industrial lands in their current use (DeMarco 1995).

The city has is also considering innovative ways of tying neighbourhood quality to intensification. The Urban Development Institute has proposed—and the City of Vancouver is considering—that funding for neighbourhood amenities such as parks, daycares and libraries in neighbourhoods be linked to an acceptance of increased densities (Urban Development Institute, 1993).

Another solution to the dilemma between the need to accommodate growth in already built-up areas and the need to stabilize existing neighbourhoods is the concept of "neighbourhood centres", an idea emanating from the urban village concept associated with the new urbanism movement in the US. The neighbourhood centre is an area of concentrated, mixed-use development that provides the focal point for a given neighbourhood. The idea was first suggested by city planners in 1989 but was dropped two years later by councillors edgy about the neighbourhood reaction. But the 1995 City of Vancouver official plan has revived the idea by proposing that 20 urban villages be created to absorb the 160,000 new residents expected as the city's share of regional growth until 2021. Public consultations conducted as part of the plan preparation process have indicated that existing residents endorsed the urban village concept over the diffusion of new residents among existing neighbourhoods (Vancouver, 1995).

2.7.3.2 Suburban Areas

Resistance to intensification is also widespread in suburban regions. Much the same concerns are raised by proposals to intensify suburban areas as in the metropolitan core, but are strengthened by the claim that residents have chosen suburban living precisely in order to escape high-density situations in the core.

The least controversial type of intensification appears to be the town centre concept. Newspaper accounts are largely supportive and do not record intense neighbourhood conflicts. This may be because most suburban town centres are being fashioned out of areas that are relatively undeveloped.

In suburban areas outside of town centres, the key intensification concept being promoted by regional planners is that of complete communities. The complete communities idea was designed to be applied to existing communities and based on three premises: a greater diversity of land uses and housing types, a compact urban form, and a balance of employment and residential uses. This concept is expected to encounter more resistance in suburban areas because these three features essentially violate the principles of suburban living. For instance, as one analyst has observed, some suburban municipalities in the region act as though:

> there is something incompatible between people in different housing types.... Variety in housing form, even when it is ground-oriented, is treated as a kind of social evil to be avoided or, if unavoidable, segregated into areas of the city away from "real" neighbourhoods.

Another planner from an inner suburban municipality pointed out: "It would be difficult to apply the concept to an existing suburban area. I would expect a lot of resident opposition to intensification and infill," required to create a complete community. Finally, "burgeoning suburban communities are having difficulty with the concept of slowing residential expansion to maintain a balance with employment growth" (Kellas 1994, 22). Thus, the idea of the complete community is not likely to get a warm reception from suburban officials and residents.

Where the idea is accepted by suburban planners, it is being translated into a greenfield development concept rather than a redevelopment strategy for existing communities. Both Chilliwack and Surrey have shown interest in the complete community concept, but mostly for greenfield situations. One regional district planner pointed out that such projects are unlikely to succeed as viable, mixed-use areas and may bring into doubt the viability of the complete community concept: "There is no way you can get the mix of land uses you need to make a complete community work from scratch. I think they are dreaming."

In the face of suburban reluctance to embrace more urban development patterns by retrofitting their existing low-density communities, the GVRD has little leverage. In fact, it lacks jurisdiction in two fundamental aspects: it does not control transportation investment (a provincial responsibility) nor does it regulate housing and land use (a municipal responsibility). It is difficult to see how even a regional growth strategy under the new legislation would ameliorate this situation, as such strategies would not normally include the detailed land use

considerations that are necessary to build a finely grained mixed-use community. The future of the complete communities movement will depend on building support for the notion within suburban communities.

The situation is equally complex with regard to resident attitudes toward growth management issues. In some cases, existing residents appear to oppose plans to increase growth by policy means. In suburban areas slated for a higher growth rate, the regional plan appears to be unpopular. For instance, the vast majority of Coquitlan residents oppose the role being slated for their municipality by the GVRD strategic plan. The plan would double the city's already high population growth rate of 5.5 percent per year. In a poll conducted in 1994, about half the residents indicated they wanted the city to slow the rate of growth and another 21 percent wanted a growth moratorium.

2.7.3.3 Urban Design

One issue that cuts across the region is the intense opposition to high-rise housing. Frisken (1994b, 528) linked this to the splendour of the region's natural setting, saying "any structure that rises above its surroundings is likely to obstruct somebody's view."

In the City of Vancouver, several unsightly high-rise projects have reinforced residents' fear of the "creeping densification" that is threatening their neighbourhoods. But this is an issue in suburban areas as well, especially where higher-density housing is proposed along arterials or in municipal centres.

Supporters of intensification point out that higher density does not have to mean ugly high-rise blocks made out of characterless concrete. The seven-storey Four Sister's Co-op in Gastown is often cited as a model of good urban design.

Recent urban design thinking in the region has centred on the possibilities of lower-rise medium-density development. As one interviewee put it:

> The job we have now is to educate the public that we are talking semi-detached ground-oriented housing not the extremely high-density development of the west end. But nor are we talking about the ridiculous front yard, side yard, and back yard setbacks we were used to. The physical structure will be much the same as we were used to, but on less space.

The Urban Development Institute accepts the need for policies that will permit higher densities and is promoting the concept of medium-density housing linked to transit and other facilities. It claims that townhouse development attracts less neighbourhood opposition, is easier to finance than high-rise condominiums, and presents less risk to the developer because the wider range of housing types appeals to a wider market. The greater interest in ground-

related housing among first time buyers is also adding to the attractiveness of medium-density housing in the region (Urban Development Institute 1993).[10]

2.7.4 Recognizing the True Costs of Sprawl

Another financial issue in the region has to do with the allocation of capital costs associated with growth. There has been a gradual shift from provincial to local sources of funding for new growth. In turn, many municipalities in the region have adopted a "pay-as-you-go" policy that forces developers to pay the lion's share of costs associated with new growth. Developers, in turn, may pass the costs on to new home owners. Those supporting intensification in the region, including the development industry (UDI 1990), have suggested that development cost charges be reformed to serve as instruments for directing the location and type of housing to be built. For instance, instead of being based on a per unit measure, they could be structured so as to be highest in areas where development is least desirable, or to encourage multi-family development.

The use of financial instruments as a means of directing growth is becoming more popular in the region. Interviewees suggested that subsidization of road construction in suburban areas should be tied to meeting growth management objectives such as density and mix of new development. Rather than automatic approval of municipal requests for funds, the province or region should be asking "does this proposal contribute or detract from our growth objectives?"

As one interviewee expressed the idea:

> It would have to be tied to municipal public financing. In other words, the GVRD would have to say to a local government, if you want money for public transit, or for libraries, or other items, you will have to pre-zone, or zone, or support certain densities. So then the politicians would say to the community groups, well, if we want the amenities for this area, we're going to have to support these developers in higher densities.

A subsidiary issue is the allocation of transportation costs between provincial and municipal governments. At present, the province pays 100 percent of the capital costs associated with transportation improvement, unlike the situation in Ontario where municipalities pay roughly 25 percent. As a result, municipalities in BC have less incentive to increase densities and achieve more compact development patterns. Redressing this imbalance may help to build consensus for intensification policies in the region.

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[10] In order to explore the implications of the compact city, the Institute established a density committee in 1991 to look at density, jobs/housing balance, and compact development. The committee published its report in 1993.

2.7.5 Affordable Housing

The review of municipal intensification policies showed that the provision of affordable housing is closely tied to the issue of intensification in the region. In the past, federal and provincial governments have been primarily responsible for providing the funding for the creation of social housing in BC municipalities. As senior levels of government attempt to reduce spending, however, funding for social housing has declined in the province. This, combined with the very high price of housing in urban areas of the province, especially the Vancouver region, has forced municipalities to take action to address the affordability issue. This role was reinforced in 1992 by provincial legislation requiring that municipalities adopt affordable housing policies in their official plans.

The fact is, however, that municipalities acting in isolation are seriously restricted in what they can accomplish in this regard. First, they do not possess the revenue base to replace declining provincial and federal expenditures on the direct provision of affordable housing; second, they are constrained by the Municipal Act in the types of policies and programs they can implement; third, their room for maneuvering is further reduced by developers who threaten to move projects to other municipalities if councils insist on downloading the cost of providing affordable housing to developers; and fourth, the reality of a regional housing market makes uncoordinated municipal action ineffective.

These concerns can be used to justify a greater role for the regional government in planning and providing affordable housing. In fact, some interests in the region have proposed that affordable housing become another area of regional responsibility. This opinion is most strongly voiced by housing and social justice advocates such as the Social Planning Council and Downtown Eastside Residents' Association, but the development industry also has an interest in consistent, region-wide housing policies. Such policies might include a consistent definition of affordable housing, the requirement for a minimum amount of affordable housing in new developments, and the need to provide a range of housing types suitable for a variety of household descriptions, e.g., housing for older people, families, and so on.

2.8 Concluding Comments

As for the other case study regions, this chapter will conclude with a summary of findings in four key dimensions of growth management and intensification. This includes an assessment of the degree to which:

- the province has coordinated its own interventions in the metropolitan area so as to effectively manage growth and promote intensification

- the metropolitan area has been effectively planned by municipalities, acting among themselves or in response to provincial initiatives, to manage growth and promote regional intensification

- the province has influenced municipal planning in favour of growth management and intensification

- municipalities in the metropolitan area have managed growth and promoted intensification within their own boundaries.

2.8.1 Provincial Coordination

Provincial action has been uneven in contributing to metropolitan growth management and intensification goals.[11] In support of regional growth management objectives, the province took action to help realize the town centres concept by establishing public corporations to promote redevelopment of downtown New Westminster and new development at Lonsdale Quay, near the SeaBus terminal, which connects the Town Centre with downtown Vancouver. Transit investment decisions made by the province were responding to a number of factors unrelated to regional plans, but have nonetheless supported the Livable Region Plan in general.

Other provincial actions have openly violated the Livable Region Plan. For instance, the Agricultural Land Reserve was gradually eroded in the region throughout the 1980s, in some cases causing immense conflict between the GVRD and the province over proposals to permit certain parcels to be removed from the reserve. Although the new NDP government has shown itself to be more concerned with preserving agricultural land, the grandfather provisions of the new regulations have permitted a certain amount of erosion to continue.

Highway expansion has been another feature of provincial policy making that has undermined regional growth management goals. Although greater attention was paid to the need to develop transit after the "great freeway debate" of 1967, the province has consistently provided major subsidies to automobile use through its highway funding program. In some cases, funding decisions have directly contradicted growth management goals in the region.

2.8.2 Metropolitan Planning

The Vancouver region is the only one of the three metropolitan region studied in this report with anything approaching effective regional planning authority. But this is an attribute more of its geographical inclusiveness than its legal authority. In fact, the GVRD has had limited power to enforce its planning vision on member municipalities. In the past, the GVRD has not had the power to approve or amend municipal plans or enjoyed any direct powers over land use, nor was there any requirement that municipal plans adhere to the regional plan. Although the region has control of water and sewer extensions, it has not felt confident enough to use this power to influence development patterns. The most egregious manifestations of this lack of regional authority have been the multiplication of planned town centres well beyond what is economically sustainable and the continued spread of low-density development in suburban regions. But, as a GVRD document notes:

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[11] In 1980, the provincial government proposed a new Land Use Act that would have provided a basis for coordinating the activities of various provincial ministries with land use implications. However, in 1993 the legislation was quietly dropped and since then there has been no formal mechanism to coordinate government action in the region.

> It is at the parcel level that the attainment of regional livability will be determined. It is also at the parcel level where the region-wide consequences of continuing with current trends and development policies seem least noticeable. As a result, the inertia of current trends and development policies must be dealt with through changing official community plans, and thereby land use patterns, to those that will lead to a more livable region (GVRD 1993, 20)

With recent changes to the Municipal Act making provision for "cross-acceptance" of plans at the local and regional level, there will be more incentive to make plans consistent, but ultimately this will depend on the level of trust and cooperation within the region. Because the GVRD has no formal governing powers, it has depended on cooperation for any significant action and—despite the tensions noted above—this has built a level of trust among member municipalities that is unknown in other major metropolitan areas where urban, suburban and rural conflicts are intense.

This level of cooperation may be attributable to the strong and lasting consensus in the region on the need to protect environmental values. As noted by Sancton (1994, 68):

> More so than any other metropolitan area in Canada, planners in Vancouver are obsessed, for understandable reasons, with protecting the natural physical environment and with maintaining a "livable region."

The Livable Region Plan that has emerged from this consensus is undoubtedly a diluted version of what regional planners were hoping to accomplish. Nonetheless, it is a significant achievement when compared to existing trends. While the new Growth Strategies Act does not change the balance of power between the region and local municipalities greatly, it will provide a further mechanism for building a regional vision that most municipalities can live with and willingly implement.

2.8.3 Provincial Influence on Municipal Planning

The province has an interest in managing growth in the region as a way of reducing infrastructure requirements, preserving foodland, and preventing further environmental deterioration. Its role in managing growth has been an indirect one: it has created the ALC to preserve farmland and provided for an evolving institutional framework for regional cooperation. But in the policy field, it has done little to guide these institutions.

In terms of housing supply, the province has been active in the provision of non-market housing but has traditionally left housing supply decisions to the local municipalities. Thus, it has not taken a leading role in adopting policies explicitly designed to promote intensification. Because of rising housing prices and rents and the concern of a social-democratic government for increasing the affordability of housing, the province's role has begun to change. Legislative modifications undertaken by the NDP have given municipalities new powers to promote the creation of affordable, and presumably higher-density, housing.

While signs of a stronger provincial role are many, the province still does not have an official policy on desirable form of development in the GVRD: it has no set of standards or policy

goals (such as on affordable housing, densities, mix of housing, transit use) for municipalities to work toward. Furthermore, the province does not involve itself deeply in the official planning process at the municipal level, where growth management and intensification policies are (or fail to be) implemented. Finally, provincial policies that do affect growth patterns—such as the development charges legislation—do not necessarily serve to direct growth or encourage more intense housing forms.

Through its funding of studies and participation in technical working groups, the province has been involved in the formulation of regional plans, beginning with the Lower Mainland Regional Planning Board and continuing with the GVRD's 1975 Livable Region Plan and the current Livable Region Strategic Plan. However, the province has avoided a direct role in regional planning.`

The province's greatest influence on settlement patterns in the region has been through direct investment in infrastructure. Municipalities around the region are currently competing for provincial investment in transit development and some have gone so far as to make their acceptance of a share of regional population growth conditional on new transit facilities. Burnaby, Coquitlan, and Richmond have all been asked to accommodate a greater share of regional growth than forecasted in their municipal plans, and have made it clear that this would only be possible by extending rapid transit facilities to those locations. (Burnaby 1994). As fiscal realities begin to constrain the fiscal capacity of the province, this may erode the government's influence in the region.

2.8.4 Municipal Planning

Throughout the 1980s and early 1990s, the City of Vancouver emerged as the most proactive on intensification issues in the region, being very active on encouraging intensification and affordable housing much in advance of other municipalities in the region and of provincial legislative changes. Both left and right-leaning parties have offered qualified support for intensification: the left because of its association with affordable housing, and the right because of its support for the development industry. Both sides agree that intensification is necessary in order to stem sprawl in the outer suburbs, to redress the housing-jobs imbalance in the regional centre, and to reduce commuting. With its own municipal charter, the city has had a relatively free hand to innovate policies in this regard.

Even in the City of Vancouver, however, councillors are cautious about supporting intensification because of its controversial nature. Left-leaning councillors may object to intensification that gentrifies neighborhoods by displacing low-cost housing with up-scale condominiums. Right-leaning councillors more likely to follow neighbourhood wishes and restrict intensification in more affluent neighbourhoods. Inner suburban municipalities, such as Burnaby and New Westminster, also show both tendencies, reflecting sensitivity to development interests and neighbourhood groups alike.

In the outer suburban areas, political support for intensification among municipal councils is more patchy. In some suburban municipalities, such as Annmore and Valcara, support for intensification projects may be lower because the housing stock is newer and in good

condition, with fewer opportunities for intensification, and because municipal politicians are expected to preserve and protect a low-density lifestyle.

On the other hand, suburban politicians know that they cannot stop demand for more compact housing in their municipalities: if they want to preserve rural amenities, avoid incurring major infrastructure expenses, give aging residents the option of staying within their neighbourhoods, and provide a range of housing choices to a changing population, they will have to allow innovative forms of development. Thus, some suburban councils, such as in Richmond and Surrey, show greater interest in allowing and promoting certain forms of intensification. As in the regional core, only intensification that does not threaten existing neighbourhoods is supported. This translates into broad support for the town centre concept and intensification of arterials.

Thus, most municipalities in the region have significant motivation to implement intensification and growth management policies on their own accord, although to varying degrees. In fact, most of the local policies that were reported here resulted from unilateral action by local governments adapting to changing economic and demographic conditions, rather than in response direction given by more senior governments.

Legislative changes introduced by the province since 1992 remove regulatory obstacles and give municipalities more power to respond to demands for higher density, more affordable housing. As the provincial ability to subsidize affordable housing declines and as market pressures build for a full range of housing types in the region and as land values continue to rise, this role is likely to expand.

3. The Toronto Region

3.1 The Region and its Governance

The Greater Toronto Area (GTA) is an administrative unit defined by the provincial government and corresponds roughly with the Toronto Census Metropolitan Area. In 1991, the GTA had a population of 4,235,756, and covered a land area of 7,200 square kilometers (see Figure 3-1 and Figure 3-2).

At the core of the region is the Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto (Metro), an upper-tier municipality composed of the City of Toronto and five other lower-tier (or "area") municipalities: York, North York, East York, Etobicoke and Scarborough. Metro was created by the province in 1953 in order to foster coordination of planning, infrastructure and service provision within its borders. Since 1988, it has had a council composed of directly elected representatives together with the mayors of the lower-tier municipalities, who sit on it *ex officio*.

Surrounding Metro Toronto, and created in the early 1970s to promote efficient capital planning and effective administration of regional services, are four other regional jurisdictions with separate governing councils: the Regional Municipalities of Durham, York, Peel and Halton.[1] Together, these regions are comprised of 24 area municipalities, ranging from large cities such as Oshawa to relatively sparsely populated areas such as East Gwillimbury. In total, therefore, there are 30 lower-tier area municipalities and five upper-tier regional municipalities in the GTA.

Upper-tier governments are responsible for determining the pattern of settlement and for identifying region-wide infrastructure needs such as arterial roads and trunk sewers. Lower-tier governments maintain most of the land use planning powers to control development, although they are subject, through plan approval requirements, to regional and provincial land use policies.

The Toronto region has no metropolitan-wide governing institution. Since 1988, however, the provincially-created Office for the Greater Toronto Area has provided a coordinating function to help facilitate regional cooperation and provincial-municipal relations.

3.2 Growth Patterns

Before 1971, most of the region's population growth occurred within what is now called Metropolitan Toronto, but since then, most of the population growth in the region has occurred outside Metro. Between 1971 and 1991, growth was especially strong to the north and west of Metro, with York region tripling its population and Peel close behind. Growth has been weaker in the east, with Durham experiencing less than a doubling of its population over that time.

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[1] These councils are elected through a system called "double direct" election whereby candidtes run for election to both lower- and upper-tier councils. The political dynamics of such electoral arrangements are thought to be the same as for indirectly election, i.e., the primary allegiance of upper-tier councillors is to their ward or lower-tier municipality.

Figure 3-1: The Toronto Study Region: Lower-tier Municipalities

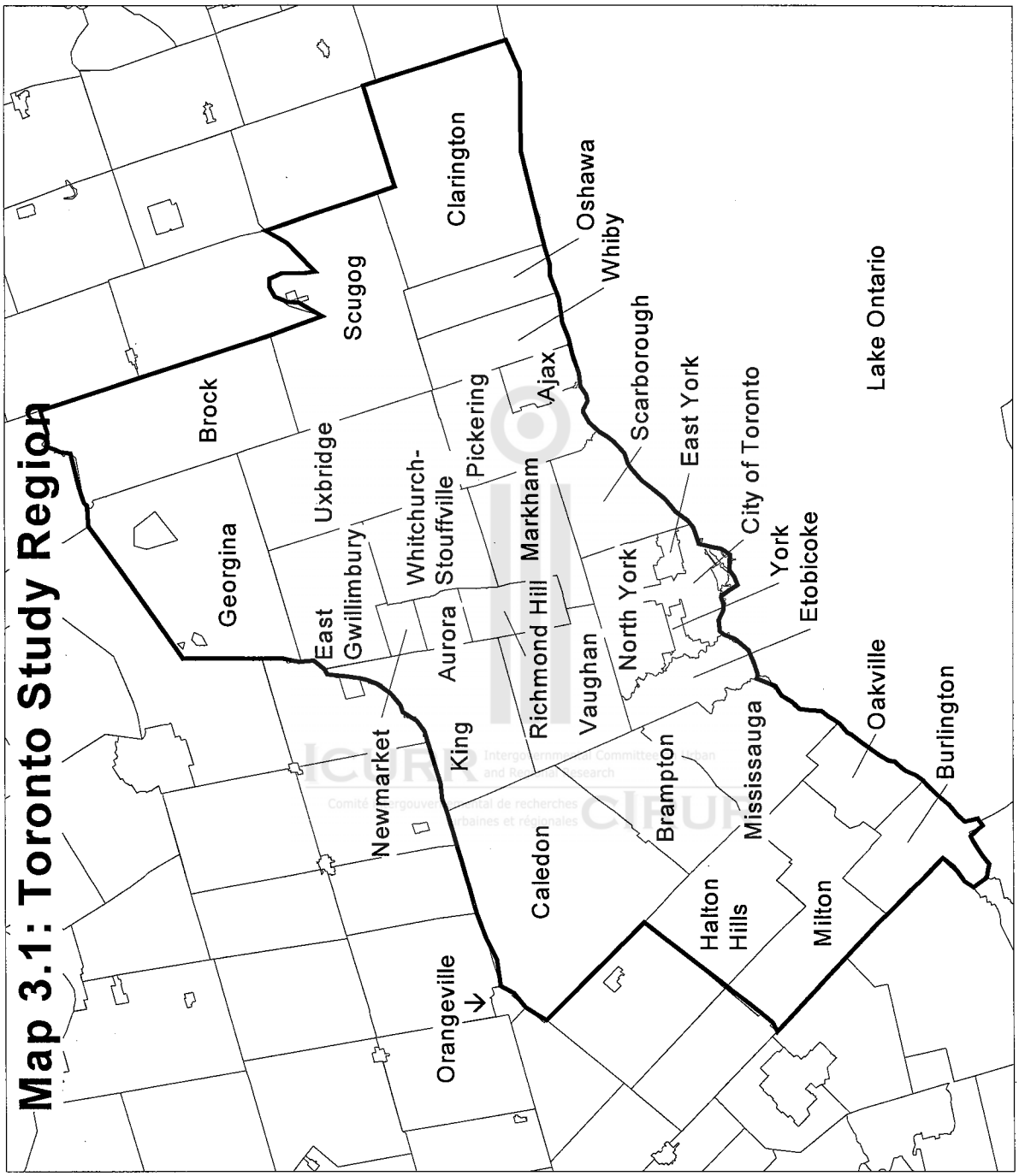

Figure 3-2: The Toronto Study Region: Upper-tier Municipalities

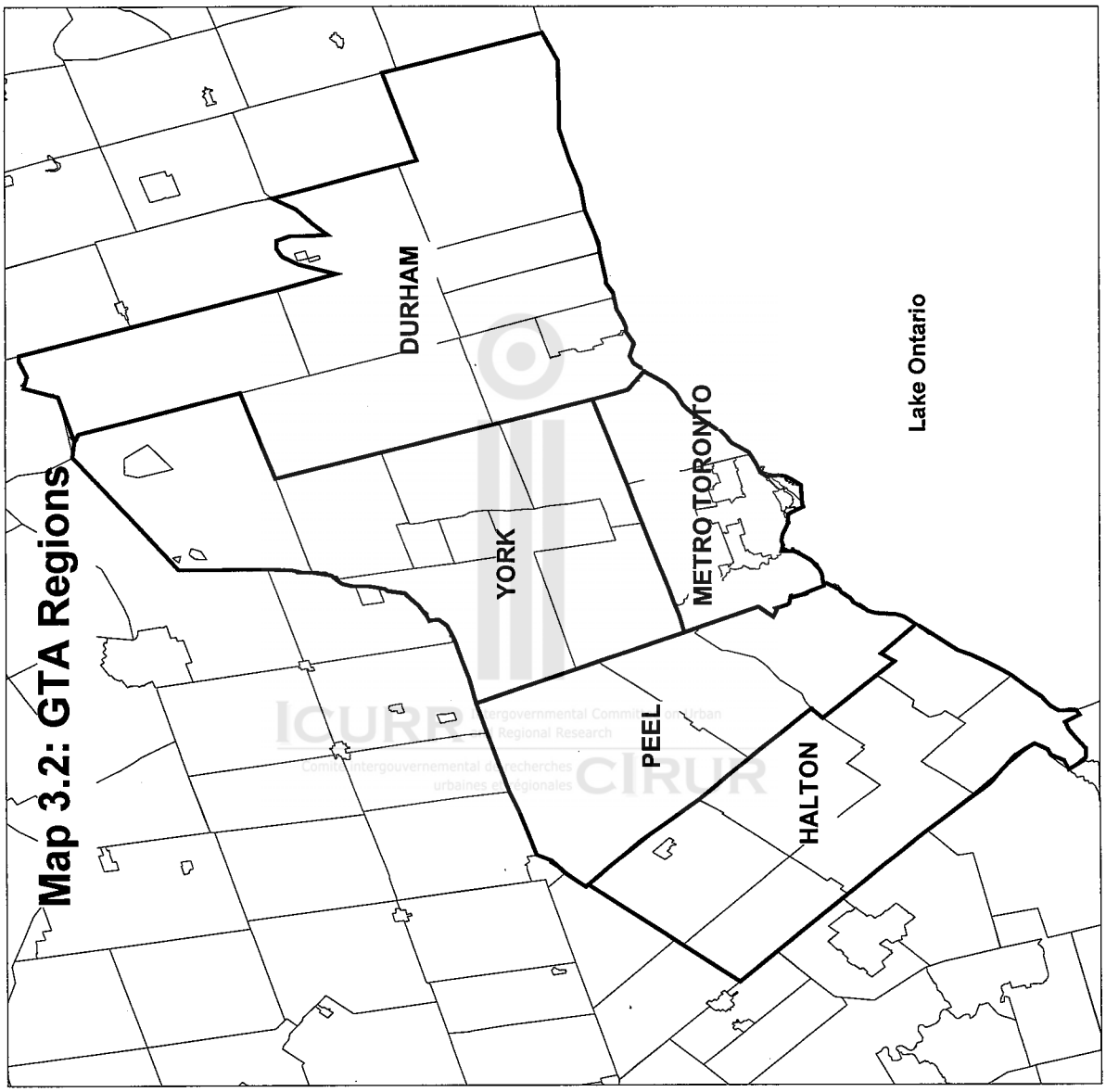

Table 3-1: Changing Population Distribution in the GTA, 1971-1991

Territory	1971		1991	
	(000s)	Percent	(000s)	Percent
City of Toronto	713	71.58	635	53.74
Metro Toronto	2,090	7.36	2,276	9.66
Durham	215	5.68	409	11.92
York	166	8.9	505	17.31
Peel	260	6.51	733	7.39
Halton	190	28.46	313	46.28
Four Outer Regions	831	100	1,960	100
GTA	2,920	100.0	4,235	100.0

Source: Statistics Canada

Compared to the rapid growth before 1971, Metro experienced a stagnation of population growth from 1971 to 1991: from 2.09 million to 2.276 million, only a 9 percent increase (see Table 3-1). To bring these trends into relief, consider that in the period between 1961 and 1966, Metro gained about 40,000 people annually, whereas in the period between 1986 and 1988, Metro actually lost an average of 30,000 people per year (*Metro Facts* 1992). Between 1971 and 1981, the City of Toronto experienced an absolute population decline from 712,785 to 599,282 but thereafter partially recovered to a 1991 population of 635,395. Relative to population growth in the rest of the GTA, however, the City of Toronto continues to decline: it accounted for only 4.9 percent of the regional population growth in the years 1986-1991, although it comprised more than 15 percent of the total regional population.

While growth attributable to natural increase had declined over the preceding three decades (birth rates declined while death rates remained constant), the main change in population trends was a dramatic shift in net migration. Before 1971, migration resulted in increasing population in Metro, while it has drained population since then. Of the three sources of net migration into Metro—international, other provinces, and within Ontario—the first two have remained positive over the 1980s.[2] Thus, the net migration out of Metro since 1971 is

[2] In 1991, about 35 percent of new immigrants to Canada came to the Toronto region and about 78 percent of these settled within Metro Toronto.

attributable to losses from Metro to other areas within Ontario, primarily to the adjacent suburban areas (*Metro Facts* 1992, 2). York, Peel and Durham regions—in that order—were the primary destinations of migrants from Metro between 1981 and 1991 (*Metro Facts* 1993, 2).

Densities in the GTA gradually decrease from the centre in concentric zones. At the core of the region is the City of Toronto, which has the highest population density in the GTA (6540.3 persons per square km. in 1991). This density is the highest of any city in Canada, but is moderate for a central city by international standards. Adjacent to the core city is a second zone of municipalities that make up the rest of Metropolitan Toronto. These municipalities have an average density of 3077 persons per square km. Metro as a whole has an average density of 3611 per square km. Beyond the perimeter of Metropolitan Toronto, a ring of municipalities in the 400-2000 people per square km. range is found along Lake Ontario and up Yonge Street as far as Newmarket. Beyond that is a ring of lower-density outer suburban municipalities with less than 400 people per square km..

In 1991, the Toronto CMA had a total of 1,366,695 housing units, 791,825 owned and 574,870 rented. Of these, almost 55 percent were of the single-detached or semi-detached type, and 38 percent of the units were in apartments. Row houses accounted for only 6 percent of the region's dwellings (Statistics Canada 1991).

It is estimated that the region's 1991 population of 4.2 million people will grow to about 6.67 million inhabitants by the year 2021 (Hemson 1993). This assumes an increasing growth rate, from about 66,000 people per year in the 1971-1991 period to about 122,000 per year. The demographic weight of the City of Toronto and Metro Toronto will continue to decline: over half the region's population will reside outside of Metro by the turn of the century.

3.3 Growth-Related Issues

3.3.1 Economic Issues

The call for GTA-wide regional planning that emerged in the late 1980s was based primarily on the need to coordinate infrastructure investment after decades of underinvestment, poor infrastructure planning, and high rates of growth. One result of the lack of regional planning was a serious mismatch between population growth in suburban areas and infrastructure availability. In the eastern part of the region where infrastructure was furnished to service a much higher population than actually occurred, there was an overcapacity of sewerage. On the western side of the region, water and sewage infrastructure was deficient, and some municipalities, such as Oakville, Milton and Halton Hills, were forced to declare development freezes in the late 1980s. North of Metro Toronto, sewage facilities were nearly exhausted and development caps were imposed.

The region had seen very little transportation infrastructure investment since the mid-1970s. Subway and rapid transit expansion had ceased after the construction of the Scarborough LRT. Other than the northward extension of Highway 404 and improvements to Highway

427, there were no major highway expenditures. By 1989, the resulting traffic congestion had become the top concern of GTA residents.

A frustrated development industry was the most vocal of the proponents for a regional plan of action. Developers wanted to open up new areas for growth and to minimize the "real and perceived problems created by recent high growth rates in the GTA," which might otherwise lead to growth moratoria (Urban Development Institute 1989, 9). The UDI noted: "Regional official plans usually only address matters within their own political jurisdiction: the wider inter-regional concerns of the GTA are likely not to be considered." Therefore, it called on the Province of Ontario to "undertake to prepare an overall strategy for future growth, including a sound economic plan that will support and fund that growth" (24).

Increasing traffic congestion in the GTA gave rise to concerns about the economic impacts due to slower movement of goods across the region. The Metropolitan Toronto Goods Movement Study, conducted in 1988 for the Metropolitan Toronto Department of Roads and Traffic, estimated the following costs:

- $1.9 billion of the $6.4 billion total annual costs of goods movement within the GTA or between the GTA and other regions in 1986 could be attributed to traffic congestion. The report estimated that the cost would rise from this 30 percent level to about 50 percent in 1997

- over the next 10 year period, the costs due to congestion would amount to about $15 billion in 1986 constant dollars.

A 1990 report by the IBI Group, commissioned for the Ministry of Transportation, concluded that increases in transportation costs of this magnitude could lead to increases in retail costs of products and services sold in the GTA, and a reduced capacity to adopt "just in time" strategies by local industry, requiring higher inventories and inventory costs (IBI 1990). Congestion would also penalize companies in the GTA relative to other regions: the difficulty of attracting new employees to the region and the increased pressure on wages due to long commute times may have discouraged companies from locating new plants within the GTA.

The demands of the development and business community for provincial action on coordinating and funding growth in the region were strongly endorsed by the suburban municipalities of the GTA. This was not surprising, given that suburban regions would be the major beneficiaries of the sewer and road infrastructure development projects being demanded. Given the historic imbalance between population and employment growth in the suburban areas, these municipalities were particularly interested in public investments that would open up new land for commercial and industrial development, increase access to markets, and generally enhance their attractiveness to potential employers.

Metro was also concerned about the increasing traffic coming in from the newly developing suburban areas outside its boundary. The low settlement densities in such areas were accompanied by a dramatic increase in vehicles per household and concomitant increases in the number of daily trips made by car. Metropolitan Toronto officials noted that virtually all

roads in Metro were carrying more cars and trucks than they were designed for, and most were over capacity for two hours or more each day. They also pointed out that most provincial dollars were going into funding new roads in the suburban regions outside of Metro, while roads and other infrastructure in Metro fell into disrepair. Economic interests in the City of Toronto were likewise concerned about the decline of the regional core as an employment centre. Councillors and planners from the city proclaimed the need for the province to direct growth into the core area and to invest in infrastructure to support that growth. This issue gathered momentum over the early 1990s and had emerged as a pre-eminent issue by mid-decade.

In fact, compared to other areas of Ontario or Canada, the Toronto region was especially hard hit by the recession of the early 1990s. The severity of the recession in the GTA can be attributed to two factors: collapse of land and housing prices, and restructuring of the economy. In the latter part of the 1980s, real estate prices in the GTA escalated dramatically, as did construction activity. But in 1990, real estate prices began to drop precipitously. After the real estate bubble burst, the Toronto area market was left with a major oversupply of office space, and residential construction declined dramatically. At the same time, key sectors of the GTA's economy were restructuring. Manufacturing employment in the GTA grew after the 1981-83 recession and reached a peak in 1987. Between 1987 and 1993 this sector lost 121,000 jobs. Employment in the financial sector peaked in 1990 and then declined by 12,000 jobs in the next two years. The construction sector lost 46,000 jobs between 1989 and 1993 (Ontario Ministry of Finance 1994; Gilbert and Pepperell 1994).

3.3.2 Environmental Issues

In the early 1990s, a number of provincial bodies drew attention to the environmental impacts of sprawl in Ontario and the GTA. Among these was the Urban Development and Commerce Task Force of the Ontario Round Table on Environment and Economy, which published its final report in March 1992. The report's recommendations were based on the view that low-density, single-family detached housing development had serious ecological, economic, and social implications. Ecological problems cited by the task force included the excess consumption of energy in transportation and heating associated with low-density development, the pollution of air, water and soil, the loss of farmland, and the destruction of the natural environment and wildlife habitat. The task force recommended that municipal planning be reformed so as to better integrate environmental and economic issues with land use planning (ORTEE 1992).

The Commission on Planning and Development Reform, chaired by John Sewell, was established in 1991 by the province to recommend changes to the planning system that would "restore integrity to the planning process, would make that process more timely and efficient, and would focus more closely on protecting the natural environment" (1992, 1). The Commission immediately identified urban sprawl as one of the key environmental issues with which it had to contend. Its concerns included rural septic-based development leading to groundwater pollution, and suburban automobile-dependent development, leading to air pollution and high levels of energy consumption.

The increasing rate of housing production and the increased proportion of housing being built in low-density detached forms had dramatically expanded the urban envelope in the 1980s, especially to the north of Metro Toronto. Key environmental features of the region were put under pressure, in particular the Oak Ridges Moraine. Not surprisingly, one of the most vocal of conservation groups at the time was Save the Oak Ridges Moraine Coalition (STORM). The moraine stretches on an east-west axis across three suburban regions and is directly in the path of the northern expansion of Toronto's urban envelope. STORM, a coalition of environmental and rate payer groups, took shape in 1989 and became a prominent critic of sprawl, calling for provincial action to preserve this fragile ecosystem. Another prominent environmental group was Save the Rouge Valley System. This group aggressively lobbied for setting aside a large linear park area on the eastern flank of Metro, straddling three regional municipalities. Activists explicitly linked the park to the need to arrest the destruction of environmental features by suburbanization.

Reflecting these concerns, in 1989 the Liberal government appointed Ron Kanter, a member of the Ontario legislature, to undertake a study of the options for preserving or creating a regional natural heritage system. The Kanter report noted that: "The difficulties associated with tremendous growth are being experienced collectively by all five Regions in the GTA. Therefore, it would seem most appropriate to consider strategies and solutions on the same GTA-wide scale" (Kanter 1990, 6).

Perhaps the greatest boost to the awareness of the region as a single ecological entity came from the work of the Commission on the Future of Toronto's Waterfront, chaired by David Crombie. The Crombie Commission was established in 1988 to examine issues related to the health of Toronto's waterfront, but extended the geographical scope of its mandate to include the whole region when it realized that Lake Ontario water quality issues could not be separated from development activity in the headwater areas of Toronto's rivers and streams. The commission coined the term "Greater Toronto Bioregion" to express this interdependence. The many studies and reports issued by the commission helped draw public attention to the issue of urban form and the need for regional coordination of growth (Commission on the Future of Toronto's Waterfront 1990).

3.3.3 Fiscal Issues

Scattered development on the urban fringe also created pressures for expensive service delivery that was fiscally unsustainable. Provincially subsidized services to rural development included police, fire, snow removal, and school busing, all of which were increased by low-density scattered development (*New Planning News* July 1992).

The fiscal costs associated with road construction and maintenance to support low-density suburban growth presented an increasing burden to a cash-strapped provincial government. About $750 million was spent in 1991 by the provincial government to build and improve local roads, an amount matched by the municipal sector. To this must be added the hundreds of millions spent annually by the province on expressway and highway construction. Developing a transit system to service lower-density suburban growth is also very costly: in 1991, the province contributed $400 million to the operation of public transit systems in the

province, with another $600 million raised through local means for this purpose. Operating costs per trip were about $1.75, and these increased as the population density of the service area decreased (*New Planning News* March 1992).

The costs of providing sewer and water were also raised as an issue related to low-density suburban development. In 1991, municipalities in Ontario spent about $1 billion to install and maintain water and sewer services. About $150 million, or 15 percent, of the total was provided through grants from the province. This burden was increased by inefficient development patterns: "The further underground sewer lines are extended, the higher the cost of furnishing and maintaining service to each household" (*New Planning News* March 1992, 7).

3.3.4 Social Issues

Ontario's population increased steadily after 1961, rising from about 6.2 million to 9.9 million in 1991. At the same time, the average household size declined from about 3.7 in 1961 to 2.7 in 1991, a decline of 27 percent in 30 years. The decreasing household size can be attributed to families having fewer children and to an aging population. The result was an increased number of "empty-nester" households. Population increases, coupled with a decline in average household size, resulted in a rising demand for smaller dwellings.

Housing affordability had been declining since the middle of the decade but reached crisis proportions in 1988 and 1989. Although affordability had become an issue elsewhere in the province, it was especially pronounced in the GTA, where the new housing price index rose from 83.5 in 1984 to 180.2 five years later. Rental rates increased substantially over the same period, although at a lower rate than housing prices, and vacancy rates were extremely low, hovering around 0.1 percent (CMHC 1995).

Besides the personal implications for those unable to find adequate housing, high housing prices were widely considered to be responsible for a number of other negative effects of provincial concern. Skyrocketing housing prices seemed likely to force both homebuyers and industry to seek out new land further beyond Metro's border, thus contributing to urban sprawl.

The suburban growth surge in the latter half of the 1980s primarily served an upscale market. Developers built houses for the richest sectors of the regional population. This led to a spatial segregation of socio-economic classes and raised the sprectre of a drift into the postwar patterns of urban development characteristic of US cities.

The Metro Toronto Home Builders Association complained that they were being stymied in their efforts to produce cheaper housing by some municipalities that would not zone land for smaller lots. Exclusionary planning—i.e., designating only low-density development, excluding higher-density, cheaper (often rental) housing—was often motivated by the desire to maintain an "exclusive neighbourhood" image or to avoid any negative fiscal implications associated with providing social services for lower-income residents.

Developers also complained that municipalities were not keeping up with providing serviced land, and were failing to plan ahead. Unless the supply of service land is increased, they argued, the cost of land would continue to rise in the face of the anticipated demand for new residential, commercial and industrial development.

Several municipalities in suburban regions of the GTA deliberately imposed, or threatened to impose, growth freezes by restricting the supply of serviced land for new development. Growth freezes were undertaken at least partially in order to force the provincial government to increase funding for services, so as to maintain service levels as growth proceeded. In Brampton, for instance, a freeze was placed on residential development by municipal council, pending increases in provincial funding for transportation services. In the same municipality, school boards attempted to freeze development in order to avoid congestion of the school system. Growth freezes were also imposed in Oakville, and threatened in Vaughan.

Developers and builders also claimed that development standards being imposed by municipalities were unrealistically high. Calling them "Cadillac standards", they claimed that sidewalk allowances, street lighting, setbacks, and road allowances were wasting land and contributing to the high cost of housing in the region.

3.4 Provincial Planning Policies

In this section, the elements of the provincial intensification and growth management policy framework are reviewed. As will be seen, Ontario has employed a wide array of policy instruments to achieve its growth management and intensification objectives, including research, financial incentives, planning guidelines, policy statements, and legislation.

3.4.1 Early Policy Efforts

In the 1970s and 1980s, growth management and intensification policies and programs were implemented to address a range of problems related to urban areas. First came the Foodland Guidelines, issued in 1978, which were meant to ensure that land with high capability for agriculture was kept available for farming. The guidelines required that municipalities contemplating the development of agricultural lands justify their plans through population projections and land use studies.

In the early part of the 1980s, the province commissioned a number of research studies (Hulchanski 1982; Klein & Sears 1983), which were motivated by the need to conserve and rehabilitate existing housing in central areas of cities experiencing population and economic decline.

Guidelines on energy efficient planning—including higher density housing and reduced development standards—were also issued in response to the energy crisis. As the energy crisis waned, however, the rationale for intensification programs shifted from resource conservation to problems of housing supply, notably the need to encourage the private creation of units suitable for senior citizens and low-income individuals through the conversion and infill

process. In response, the province adopted a range of financial incentive programs, such as Convert-to-Rent, which offered interest-free loans to owners of detached homes so that they could add an accessory unit.

3.4.2 Housing Policies

These policies and programs met with little success. The Foodland Guidelines were widely seen as ineffective in preserving land under development pressure in large and rapidly growing urban areas. The energy planning guidelines seemed to vanish without a trace and appeared to have little impact on the municipal approvals process. Furthermore, a series of studies showed that the financial incentive programs met with some success in terms of the uptake by property owners and the creation of new units, but that municipal intransigence presented a barrier to their wider success.[3] In response, the provincial government decided to adopt a policy statement that would counteract municipal prohibitions on intensification.

3.4.2.1 The Housing Policy Statement

The result was one of the most important expressions of the province's policy interest in intensification: the 1989 Land Use Planning for Housing Policy Statement. This Housing Policy Statement was one among a small number of such statements adopted under Section 3 of the 1983 Planning Act, which authorized the province to issue policy statements that other ministries and municipal authorities must have "regard to" in their decisions. According to Kanter (1992, 5), "the Housing Policy Statement reflected increasing provincial interest in the impact of planning decisions on housing cost and design, an area which had previously been left to municipalities."

The Housing Policy Statement had five components: the supply of land, streamlining the planning process, monitoring, the range of housing types, and intensification. This section focuses on the last two.

The statement encouraged municipal planning policies that would increase the range of housing choices in the context of the local housing market. Choice was interpreted in three dimensions: housing type, tenure, and unit price. The policy statement required that municipalities:

- designate lands in the official plan specifying appropriate residential uses and densities
- establish policies in the official plan so that the range of housing types be distributed throughout the municipality on lands designated for residential use

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[3] At any rate, by the turn of the 1990s, funding for most of these programs were being wound up and the money transferred to the NDP government's job creation strategy, the JobsOntario Community Action Program. This represented an important shift in priorities: the primary objective of JobsOntario was community economic development, and the program had no objectives specifically related to intensification.

- incorporate implementation policies in the official plan to assist in achieving the identified range of housing types

- establish policies and standards to enable at least 25 percent of new development (either greenfield or brownfield) to be affordable.[4]

The intensification aspect of the statement encouraged municipalities to designate areas in the official plan where residential intensification would be permitted. Thus, municipalities were directed to adopt policies that would promote intensification activities such as infill housing, redevelopment of residential or non-residential lands, conversion of non-residential structures to residential use, and the creation of accessory apartments. The purpose was to "identify opportunities to increase the supply of housing through better use of existing resources, building or serviced sites to meet changing demographic trends and housing demands" (Housing Policy Statement 1989, 8). In carrying out this purpose, municipalities were to designate areas in the official plan where each form of residential intensification would be permitted. Municipalities could restrict intensification locations on the basis of the following criteria only:

- the physical potential of the existing building stock or previously developed sites to accommodate the identified forms of intensification

- the ability of existing services to support new households in the affected area

- the potential demand for these forms of accommodation.

Otherwise, "[m]unicipalities are required to designate all sites and/or areas that meet these tests for specific forms of residential intensification" (Brown 1990, 7-8).

3.4.2.2 Apartments in Houses/Residents Rights Act

The Housing Policy Statement was strongly resisted by municipalities in Ontario. In particular, municipalities resented those provisions that required them to zone for basement apartments anywhere in the city by August 1, 1991. By the deadline no municipality in priority areas of Ontario had fully complied. In fact, many municipalities had expressed their strong opposition to allowing accessory apartments in single-family neighbourhoods. In 1992, the NDP government announced that the province would pursue legislation to enforce the provisions of the Housing Policy Statement with respect to basement apartments, once again bringing the province into sharp conflict with municipalities.

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[4] The policy statement defined "affordable housing" as housing that would have a market price or rent that would be affordable to households within the lowest 60 percent of the income distribution for the housing region. "Affordable" was defined as annual housing costs that do not exceed 30 percent of gross annual household income. Every year, the ministry puts out a guideline showing the income of households in the 60th percentile of income earners for a given area, and the amount of housing cost that are affordable to them. Thus, the definition of what counted as affordable housing permitted some local variation within a provincially defined framework.

Despite the municipal protest, the province was committed to action on this issue as a way of normalizing the status of tenants in these apartments. The government maintained that accessory apartments were the most benign and non-intrusive forms of intensification because they could be produced without changing the exterior appearance of neighbourhoods.

The Residents Rights Act (1994) amends the Planning Act and the Municipal Act to prevent municipalities (through official plans and zoning bylaws) from prohibiting accessory apartments in detached, semi-detached, and row houses located in zones that permit residential use. Existing units became legal as long as they met applicable standards (fire, building, planning) and new units in detached, semi-detached, and row houses were permitted as of right.

Essentially, the Act "deemed" itself into municipal zoning bylaws, overriding the local planning process. However, the Act did not alter the authority of municipalities to regulate the physical character of the neighbourhoods. Municipalities retained the power to deal with matters such as lot size, lot coverage, yard setbacks, building height, maximum building floor area, and landscaped open space, as long as such standards did not exceed those applied to houses without secondary units.

3.4.3 Growth Management Policies

By the beginning of the 1990s, the policy context had begun to undergo changes that tended to reduce the urgency of housing supply issues and shift attention to wider issues of urban development. A sharp reduction in the number of housing starts meant that growth no longer outstripped land supply, the price of housing fell throughout the region, interest rates were down, the rate of increase in rents gradually declined, and rental unit vacancy rates rose. In the place of housing issues, fiscal concerns now served to place sprawl on the public agenda. According to one provincial planner: "Sprawl translated into costs for the province, including the need to upgrade roads, improve ambulance services, fire services, and so on. We wanted to reduce costs by making growth patterns more efficient."

3.4.3.1 Growth and Settlement Guidelines

In 1992, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs issued its Growth and Settlement Guidelines, which would guide provincial planners in reviewing and approving municipal official plans and official plan amendments.

The guidelines suggested that municipalities develop a vision of what was desirable for the future of a community: "If a common vision is established, the planning process can direct growth and development to appropriate locations in suitable forms to best achieve this vision" (1). They also embodied the new thinking on sustainable development, incorporating economic, environmental and social considerations. According to the document, land use planning should:

- contribute to the protection of natural and cultural heritage, promote energy and water efficiency and the conservation and wise management of natural resources to support both environmental quality and economic growth

- support economic growth and fiscal efficiency by making use of existing infrastructure and human services and efficient provision of new infrastructure and services to newly developing areas

- recognize social needs by contributing to the accessibility of a full range of resources such as housing and employment, open space, and education and health facilities.

The guidelines consolidated and formalized bureaucratic practices that had already been instituted through the Ministry's planning approval process. Cabinet-approved guidelines provided provincial planners with greater legitimacy and authority to negotiate with municipalities over planning policies, such as official and secondary plans.[5]

According to Kanter (1992, 9):

> The intent of the Growth and Settlement Policy Guidelines seems to be the establishment of a development hierarchy. In simplified terms, intensification of built-up areas is best; new development near built-up areas may be allowed if densities are high enough; development in other areas is bad, and will only be allowed if the municipality undertakes a comprehensive needs analysis.

The guidelines contain a number of specific policies relating to growth in both urban and rural areas. Many of these merely reiterated what had already been espoused in the provincial Housing Policy Statement of 1989, including the need for an adequate supply of designated and serviced land based on population projections, and the need to explore and exploit intensification opportunities before expanding the urban envelope. The main difference between the two is the focus on housing supply in the Housing Policy Statement, and on efficient use of land and servicing in the Growth and Settlement Guidelines.

3.4.4 Urban Structure Planning

One of the principal goals of the Growth and Settlement Guidelines was to achieve more transit-friendly development patterns. Toward this end, the Guidelines made reference to another provincial policy document, the Transit-Supportive Land Use Planning Guidelines (Ontario Ministry of Transportation and Ministry of Municipal Affairs 1992). The Transit-Supportive Guidelines specify a large number of planning and development practices that

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[5] They did not, however, achieve the status of a policy statement under sections 3 of the Planning Act, a fact reflected in the curious absence of modal verbs such as "must" or "will" and the use of "should" in passages such as: "all planning jurisdictions... should reflect these provincial policy guidelines in their decisions affecting any planning matter" (9). Ministry of Municipal Affairs staff did not propose a policy statement because the Sewell Commission was known to be working on similar guidelines that would eventually become part of the comprehensive set of policy statements passed under planning reform in 1995. The Growth and Settlement Guidelines were meant to act as an interim measure.

support the provision and use of public transit. The key recommendation is to establish an urban structure based on a hierarchy of nodes and corridors.

3.4.4.1 Transit-Supportive Land Use Planning Guidelines

As the guidelines themselves indicate, they "represent suggestions and advice to be used at the discretion of municipalities, and are not formal statements of provincial policy" (1). The guidelines identified density as a key factor in transit-supportive land uses.

> Although higher residential and employment densities will not necessarily result in higher levels of transit use, they are a necessary prerequisite. As development densities increase, the number of potential passengers per route kilometre increases, helping to generate more ridership and higher revenues. With increasing revenues, transit operations can provide more frequent service at current subsidy levels. Frequency of transit service, in turn, has a direct impact on transit ridership and can encourage even higher levels of transit use (2).

The guidelines also suggest that upper- and lower-tier official plans incorporate provisions to encourage the development of an urban structure based on linked nodes and corridors. Activity nodes allow a better mix of uses and higher development densities. These nodes would have the following characteristics:

- Mixed use: By concentrating mixed uses into activity nodes, trip ends are concentrated into discrete locations, making it more convenient to use transit. Uses should include employment, retail, recreational, entertainment and cultural facilities. Residential uses should also be encouraged in order to make transit services more feasible and to ensure that nodes are populated around the clock.

- Compact: Higher-density residential uses, again, ensure that transit services will be well used. Nodes should be higher density than surrounding uses, but include a variety of housing types and income levels.

- Hierarchy of nodes: The size, density and variety of uses at nodes should be related to the level of transit services provided.

The guidelines conceived of corridors as linear activity nodes along major transit routes. Corridors should be:

- Medium density: This seems to suggest slightly lower densities than in activity nodes.

- Mixed uses: The notion of the Main Street was used to illustrate this concept: residential, retail, small shopping plazas, local commercial, offices, small scale light industrial and entertainment activities would be encouraged.

3.4.5 Environmental Policies

A number of environmental policies issued by the province related indirectly to growth patterns and residential densities. These included:

- the Wetlands Policy Statement issued jointly between Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Ministry of Natural Resources in 1992
- the Mineral Aggregate Resources Policy Statement, issued jointly by Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Ministry of Natural Resources in 1986
- the Flood Plain Planning Policy Statement, issued jointly by Ministry of Natural Resources and Ministry of Municipal Affairs in 1988
- the Ministry of the Environment and Energy's Stormwater Quality Best Management Practices, released in 1991
- Guidelines on Planning for the Reuse of Potentially Contaminated Sites, released in 1992 by the Ministry of the Environment and Energy
- Guideline on the Separation Distance Between Industrial Facilities and Sensitive Land Uses, announced by the Ministry of the Environment and Energy in 1992.
- Guidelines on Land Use on or Near Landfills and Dumps, released in 1987 by the Ministry of the Environment and Energy
- Watershed Management on Watershed Basis Guidelines, issued by the Ministry of the Environment and Energy and Ministry of Natural Resources in 1993.

Due to limitations of space, these policies cannot be given the detailed attention they deserve. However, some indication of the impact of these policies on municipal planning affecting urban form can be provided. Impacts can be divided into four main categories: environmental take-outs, separation between different uses, the space requirements of environmental facilities, and limitation on the intensity of land use.

The term "environmental take-outs" refers to the dedication of land in order to support ecological functions or resource development, making it off-limits to development. This includes natural area designations, significant wetlands, aggregate development areas, floodplains, headwater and recharge areas, in addition to the required buffer areas.

Separation between different uses affects urban form by imposing minimum distances between residential development and adjacent industrial and agricultural uses or facilities such as landfills. Provincial policies recommending stormwater management facilities such as extended detention ponds, infiltration systems, and constructed wetlands can absorb a significant amount of land in reducing environmental impacts of development.

Limitations on density may be implied by water management policies incorporated into watershed or subwatershed plans. These plans typically recommend that municipalities incorporate constraints on hard surface coverage and intensity of land use in order to optimize water infiltration to ground water.

3.4.6 Planning Reform

The Commission on Planning and Development Reform was established by the province in 1991 to review the planning process and recommend legislative and policy changes in response to widespread concerns about an aimless planning system that was time-consuming and inefficient, marked by intense conflict between different levels of government and had failed to take environmental consideration into account as a routine aspect of land use planning. The Commission was chaired by John Sewell, a former Mayor of the City of Toronto. The main goals of the Commission were to streamline the planning process and increase its public openness, redefine provincial and municipal responsibilities, and incorporate environmental issues into land use planning. One of the key themes advanced by the Commission was the need for more compact urban development patterns and residential intensification in particular (*New Planning News* 1992).

The Commission released its final report in 1994 and its recommendations were substantially incorporated into legislative and policy changes that came into effect in March 1995. One of the main features of the planning reform was the redefinition of the provincial role. From a system whereby the province influenced development by exercising its approval authority over a myriad of specific municipal planning decisions, the report moved to a policy-driven system whereby the province would elaborate a detailed set of planning policies and use them to approve strategic municipal decisions in official plans. Thus, the province would delegate most of its approval authority, including the approval of lower-tier official plans and official plan amendments, to the upper-tier municipal governments, who were expected to ensure that lower-tier municipalities abided by provincial policy statements in their official plans and other planning decisions.

As part of this new system, a comprehensive set of policy statements was elaborated that incorporated previously announced policies such as the Growth and Settlement Guidelines, the Housing Policy Statement, the Foodland Guidelines, Wetland Policy Statement and so on. This gave a consistent, across-the-board policy statement status to what had been a confusing array of different policies. The key motifs behind the comprehensive set of policies was the need to control sprawl, preserve environmental features and agricultural land, and encourage intensification.

The new comprehensive set of policies strengthened some of the intensification provisions of the old policies, requiring that 30 instead of 25 percent of new housing be affordable, and that half of this should be affordable to the lowest 30th percentile of household income.

Growth management policies contained in the Housing Policy Statement and the Growth and Settlement Guidelines were incorporated into the comprehensive set of policy statements with some modification. On the one hand, provisions that would have municipalities establish

minimum densities for new development were dropped and the new policies were less directive on transit-supportive land use. On the other hand, the new policies encouraged municipalities to use residential development standards that facilitate compact and affordable housing.

The comprehensive set of policy statements was backed up by very detailed implementation guidelines that were developed through consultation with stakeholder groups. These guidelines provided municipalities with further information on the meaning of the policy statements, and a variety of means to fulfill their requirements.

The policy changes were accompanied by legislative changes that gave more weight to the province's policy statements. Now, municipal official plans and other planning decisions were to "be consistent with" policy statements under the revised Planning Act, replacing the earlier "have regard to." The "be consistent with" provision was thought to provide less leeway to municipalities in interpreting provincial policy objectives. Essentially this meant that provincial policies would carry more weight at the municipal level and with tribunals such as the OMB. Also important was the provision that the province would stipulate mandatory contents of upper- and lower-tier official plans through regulations. Such contents were likely to include population and housing projections, infrastructure planning, and density provisions.

3.5 Metropolitan Planning Policies

This section describes the policy framework at the regional level, focusing on three major initiatives: the creation of upper-tier governments; the Toronto Centred Region Concept of the 1970s; and, more recently, the activities of the Office for the Greater Toronto Area (OGTA).

3.5.1 Creation of Regional Governments

Population growth in the Toronto area was very strong after WWII, taking place mostly in the suburban areas immediately adjacent to the City of Toronto. But because the city had decided to stop annexations of surrounding municipalities in 1912 (because most of the candidate municipalities were fiscally insolvent) the metropolitan area was not equipped with a strong planning authority to manage growth (Kulisek and Price 1988).

In response, the provincial government designated a metropolitan planning area, appointed a nine man Toronto and York Planning Board and charged it with preparing an official land use plan for Toronto and its twelve suburbs. In 1949, the Toronto and York Planning Board proposed that the area infrastructure needed for growth be established, but the question remained as to how those services could be effectively provided in an area divided into a number of separate autonomous municipalities. The planning board recommended that political unity be imposed on the metropolitan region by amalgamation of the city proper with its suburbs.

In 1950, the Toronto City Council endorsed the Toronto and York Planning Report and agreed to apply to the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) for full amalgamation of the city with the suburbs.[6] The proposal was resisted by the now large and affluent suburbs, who were in favour of continued municipal autonomy. The OMB report (known as the Cumming Report after the name of the current chair of the OMB) was issued in 1953, resulting in the passage of the Metropolitan Toronto Act, which marked the beginning of Canada's first experiment in regional government. The boundaries accommodated over 90 percent of the population living and working in Toronto's housing and labour market (Bourne 1984). From a growth management point of view, Metro Toronto encompassed the areas of high growth and was well equipped to provide the financial basis and the planning coordination to manage the problems associated with growth within its borders.

The Cumming Report warned against the view that the metropolitan boundary should be considered the permanent limit of the jurisdiction (Wronski and Turnbull 1984). In the meantime, Metropolitan Toronto had been given some planning control over development in its hinterland through the mechanism of the Metropolitan Toronto Planning Board. While the board lacked a mandate to provide a positive context for growth in the hinterland,[7] it succeeded in preventing the worst excesses of uncontrolled and uncoordinated growth in the area.

As development pressures began to extend beyond the boundaries of Metropolitan Toronto, however, the planning board proved incapable of effective growth management. Municipalities in the area were experiencing financial distress as growth spilled over local boundaries and as the need for municipal infrastructure outstripped their ability to borrow. Municipalities responded to this stress by adopting strategies that would be destructive in the long-term, including cut-throat competition with neighbouring municipalities to attract commercial and industrial assessment and exclusionary zoning policies to prevent high-density, low-income housing that would burden local infrastructure and services without significantly adding to the assessment base.

The Ontario Committee on Taxation (chaired by Lancelot J. Smith) was set up in 1963 by the provincial government to look into the local taxation and revenue system. The Smith Report, released in 1967, recommended the far-reaching reform of the structure of local government, in particular the creation of regional governments. The province responded by planning a series of regional governments that would eventually blanket the whole province, starting with hot spot areas in the Golden Horseshoe, the Ottawa area and Sudbury.

The Minister of Municipal Affairs of the time, Darcy McKeough, explained in a 1968 speech to the legislature that a regional municipality would "be responsible for planning the broad,

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[6] The OMB is an independent, provincially-appointed administrative tribunal that adjudicates on planning and related conflicts.

[7] Unlike the Metropolitan Toronto government, the Metropolitan Toronto Planning Board did not have the power to incur debt for capital expenditures and therefore could not supply the infrastructure needed to support large-scale growth in the hinterland.

overall physical and economic framework for regional growth," and that the boundaries for the new regional governments should cover "the urban centre and its rural hinterland, both of which are, in fact, mutually interdependent" (quoted in Wronski and Turnbull 1984, 129).

These principles were not, however, to be applied to the Toronto region. Instead of expanding the Metropolitan Toronto government to include the growing areas outside the metropolitan boundaries, as envisaged by the OMB in 1953, the province decided to abolish the Metropolitan Toronto Planning Board and carve out four regional municipalities from Toronto's hinterland: York Region was established in 1971 and Durham, Peel, Halton, and Hamilton-Wentworth were created in 1974.

Thus, rather than enhancing the region-wide planning capacity of the Metropolitan Toronto Planning Board, the province actually eliminated the basis for truly regional planning in the area. According to Bourne (1984, 139) "None of these political units, however, makes any sense in social, economic or functional terms; nor are they suitable areas for planning purposes." Most importantly, the regions were established on a north-south axis, whereas the most important flows in the region are from east to west.

In the opinion of at least some observers, the creation of upper-tier governments in the Toronto region has been an important factor in the accelerating tendency for growth to situate outside Metropolitan Toronto, leading to the spread of the urban envelope. "There were many factors contributing to this trend, but little doubt that the urgent need for the new regional governments to enhance their status through development of taxable property within their jurisdictions was a major factor" (CUI 1992, 16-17).

3.5.2 The Toronto-Centred Region Concept

In the 1960s, the province undertook a series of growth management exercises encompassing the entire Toronto region, culminating in the Toronto-Centred Region (TCR) concept in the early 1970s. These exercises had as their goals: (1) to put limits on new growth and to contain it, (2) to preserve agricultural, recreational and natural lands, (3) to promote some development in centres away from the Toronto core, and (4) to geographically balance growth in the region by slowing development in the west and encouraging it in the east (Frisken 1990).

While the TCR concept was adopted as provincial policy in 1971, the planning implications of the concept were never formally implemented. This failure has been attributed to the resistance to the plan offered by municipalities whose population and employment growth were to be curtailed, especially in the north and west of the region, objections from private land holders whose development potential would be affected by the plan, a range of provincial decisions that contradicted the plan (such as the decision to built the York-Durham trunk sewer to support growth in the north, huge land banking investments in the west, and the failure of the province to go ahead with major infrastructure investments in the east such as the Pickering airport, the Scarborough expressway and the extension of GO Transit to Oshawa). Economic changes were also important in this respect, the oil crisis of 1973 reoriented thinking on regional planning toward concentrating growth in already built up

areas, fiscal restraint undermined commitment to major infrastructure projects to support regional plan, and market forces clearly pointed toward greater development in the west than in the east of the region.

By the mid 1970s, it was already becoming clear that the province was not completely committed to the plan and hopes for implementation began to fade (COLUC 1975). By the end of the decade it was clear that most of the aims of the proposal were not going to be realized, with two exceptions: the Parkway Belt Planning and Development Act and the Niagara Escarpment Planning and Development Act were both passed as an offshoot of the TCR plan. They served to limit sprawl in specific areas of the region: the former by imposing strict planning constraints on development on the Niagara Escarpment on the western flank of the region and the latter by creating a greenway to break urbanization to the north of Toronto.

The best evidence that the TCR concept had failed in its objectives to manage growth in the region was the continuation—or acceleration—of dispersed, relatively unstructured growth in the region (Farncombe 1993). By the end of the 1980s, these development patterns had resulted in serious enough problems on a regional scale that the province initiated a new round of regional planning exercises.

3.5.3 The Office for the Greater Toronto Area

In 1988, the province created the Office for the Greater Toronto Area (OGTA) in order to help coordinate provincial policies affecting growth and development in the region. The experience associated with the TCR exercise had convinced the province that it could not plan the region in a top-down fashion. Thus, the mandate of the office was to coordinate, mediate, and build consensus on a regional growth management strategy. The office has no legislative basis for its role and no formal planning mandate. It depends for its effectiveness on the willingness of other ministries and governments to implement its recommendations (Office for the Greater Toronto Area, undated).

3.5.3.1 The Urban Structure Concepts Study

In January 1990, the GTCC and the OGTA contracted a private firm (IBI) to explore the implications of the rapid population growth that had been forecasted for the area. Three regional urban form scenarios—spread, nodal, and concentrated urban form—were proposed and assessed from a variety of perspectives, including environmental and fiscal.

The central scenario assumed that most new growth (both residential and employment) would be accommodated inside Metro, and concentrated in areas where significant redevelopment potential existed on underutilized lands. The spread scenario represented a continuation of current development patterns, with new population distributed largely outside Metro in an evenly distributed, low-density pattern, primarily on greenfields land at the fringe. Employment growth was assumed to take place in the downtown Toronto, in the already established suburban sub-centres and, to a lesser extent, in the adjacent four regions. The nodal scenario assumed roughly the same regional distribution of population and employment

growth as the spread model, but concentrated that growth into higher-density nodes located in suburban areas, resulting in a more compact form.

The IBI report used eight criteria to assess the relative benefits and costs of the three growth scenarios: urban structure, economic impetus, transportation, hard services, greening/environment, human services, external impacts, and overall infrastructure costs. Each of these criteria were further refined into a number of factors, and within each factor, one or more measures were developed as a basis for evaluating differences among the three scenarios, for a total of 42 measures.

The general conclusion was that the three scenarios fared about equally from a fiscal point of view, but that the central option made the most efficient use of resources such as land and energy and placed the least stress on the environment. However, the central scenario would require the greatest amount of government regulation to direct population growth from suburban areas to Metro. It would also require the most dramatic change from the status quo in terms of population density, housing type, and choice of transportation mode, "with the risks that are inherent in any significant change from the status quo" (IBI 1990a, S-9).

The spread option appeared to be less risky in that it would require less change from the status quo in terms of delivery of new housing, lifestyles, and government intervention in the development process. However, it was least compatible with the principles of sustainable development because it would consume the greatest amount of farm land and other environmental features, use the most resources, and produce the most air pollution due to the auto-dependency and long commutes implied by the model.

The nodal option was considered intermediate between the central and spread options with respect to the principles of sustainable development. Relative to the spread option, it would provide a greater range of choice of housing types, community size and character, living styles, transportation modes and human services, while reducing per capita resource requirements and pollution levels.

If the report's assessment of the three growth concepts are compared, we see that the central option fared best across the 42 measures used to assess the various options. It was considered superior on 22 of them, whereas the nodal and spread options placed first in only six each. However, the consultants were careful not to endorse any one scenario: rather, they emphasized that the study was of a "pre-planning" nature and was intended to stimulate public discussion about future growth issues and the implications for infrastructure investment.

After only six months of study, the IBI findings were published as a seven-volume report in June of 1990, and circulated for discussion. All five regions subsequently responded, as did several local municipalities. Responses were also received from several ministries and non-governmental groups.

Responses showed that there was a widespread acceptance of the nodal structure as a starting point for developing a growth management strategy for the region: both suburban and urban municipalities, provincial agencies, and non-governmental stakeholders endorsed the nodal

concept in principle. However, there were three general qualifications to this "emerging consensus". First, the endorsements suggested that the term "nodal" might cover a wide array of (potentially conflicting) development visions. Secondly, there was some reservation about the intensification aspect of the nodal concept. Thirdly, given the large number of nodes projected by the IBI study, and the claim that current development patterns were already conforming to this model, it was not clear how this option represented a deviation from existing trends. Nonetheless, the nodal option was soon adopted by the OGTA as a growth strategy for the region (OGTA 1991).

3.5.3.2 The Urban Form Working Group

Although its methodology was criticized by municipalities and academics alike, the IBI study moved the discussion about urban structure in the region a major step forward: in response to the study, the five regional governments of the GTA had agreed in principle that urban sprawl should be stopped and that the concept of nodal development should guide growth in the region. In 1992, the OGTA set up six working groups to study various aspects of this concept and develop more detailed proposals. Working groups included: urban form, countryside, infrastructure, economic vitality, financing mechanisms, and human and social development. This section will focus on the work of the urban form group as it dealt most directly with the planning issues related to the proposed nodal urban structure.

The Urban Form Working Group, established in November 1991, met frequently for several months and produced its report in April 1992. The group was made up of 21 provincial and municipal non-elected officials.[8] The mandate of the group included defining and elaborating upon what was meant by "urban structure", "compact urban form", "nodes and corridors" in the GTA context, and what needed to be done at the local, regional and provincial levels to achieve a more compact form.

The working group began with the image of a nodal structure sketched out by the IBI report. According to the OGTA working group, a node is "an area of concentrated activity serving as a community focal point and providing services or functions not normally found elsewhere in the community. To work well, everything in a node should be close to everything else. This helps promote a pedestrian-oriented environment by ensuring walking distances to and from public transit are reasonable" (OGTA 1992a, 19).

There are at least four types of nodes: central, major, intermediate and local. The only central node in the GTA is downtown Toronto, which serves as a unique focal point for the province and beyond. It is characterized by a very high concentration of employment and a wide array

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[8] The 10 provincial members represented most of the ministries directly involved in regional growth issues - such as the Ministries of Municipal Affairs, Housing, Transportation, Natural Resources, and Environment - except for the Ministry of Agriculture and Food. One group member was from the OGTA. The rest represented various upper and lower-tier municipalities in the region. Upper-tier governments were consistently represented except for the region of Peel. Representatives from rapidly growing municipalities adjacent to Metro dominated the list of lower-tier members: Mississauga, Vaughan, Markham, Ajax, and Richmond Hill. There were no representatives from rural municipalities.

of specialized land uses such as government and cultural attractions. It has the highest residential densities in the region, and relies on major transportation infrastructure such as the subway, LRT, and GO Transit.

Major nodes provide a GTA-wide focal point, have a high employment concentration along with residential, commercial and retail uses. Densities are not as high as in the central node, but a higher level of transit, such as subway or LRT, is necessary in order to support this nodal level. City centres in Etobicoke, Mississauga, North York, Scarborough and Oshawa constitute the major nodes of the region. These centres are at various states of maturity, with Oshawa, North York and Mississauga well developed, Scarborough at an intermediate stage, and Etobicoke being a projected centre.

Intermediate nodes provide focal points for the upper-tier municipalities, often with a predominance of employment, commercial and retail uses but with a growing residential component. Densities are from medium to high, but these nodes are more car-oriented and are supported by medium level transit services such as buses, streetcar and GO transit. The 23 intermediate nodes were scattered throughout the region, with 13 in suburban regions and 10 within Metro Toronto. These nodes represent a mix of existing, currently developing, and projected locations.

According to the OGTA report, nodes are to be connected by corridors. A corridor is the historical heart of a community, linear in nature and running along main or arterial roads. The key to successful corridors is diversity of use and maintaining activity throughout the day. Corridors are served—or are planned so as to be capable of being served—by public transit, and they encourage pedestrian movement. Densities are higher than in the surrounding community, but would normally be lower than in the nodes linked by the corridor. Like nodes, corridors can mature, from a uni-functional transit routes linking nodes to full-fledge main streets with a diversity of forms and functions.

In its goal to provide a detailed model for a functional urban structure that could serve as a basis for municipal planning, the group's work was not completely successful. First, the spatial location of nodes and corridors was extremely vague in the group's final report. This vagueness could be attributed to the lack of consensus about the appropriate role of the OGTA. Some municipal members of the group believed that the OGTA's role should be restricted to enunciating general principles and that land use designations should be left to the municipalities themselves. Secondly, the number of intermediate nodes were probably larger than could be economically supported by the projected growth in the GTA. This outcome may have been due to the fact that municipal representatives in the working group competed with each other to have a node designated in their municipality.

3.5.3.3 The 1993 Population Projections

The IBI and urban form working group exercises were based on population and employment projections done by Clayton in 1989. When the 1991 Census data became available, the OGTA initiated a new round of forecasting for the period 1991 to 2031. The resulting report by Hemson, entitled *The Outlook for Population and Employment in the GTA*, was published

in August 1993. The first major change was in the absolute amount of growth expected in the GTA. The increase was from a range of 5.5-6.5 million in the 1989 projection to 5.8-7.7 million in the 1993 projection, and from a "most-likely scenario" projection of 6 million in 1989 to 6.7 million in 1993.

The second major change from the 1989 projections was in the distribution of growth. Noteworthy is the fact that new projections did not change the growth forecast for Metro: it was constant at about 2.4 million in 2021. Rather, the increase in expected growth was entirely attributed to more rapid growth in the outer regions of the GTA. In other words, the change in growth projections from 1989 to 1993 foresaw a further decentralization of the region and a smaller share of new growth for Metro, expected to decline from almost 11 percent to about 5 percent.

The numbers reported above for the 1993 report make up the "Reference Scenario", which assumes that current policy initiatives to stem employment decline in Metro would be successful and that "the numerous intensification efforts will be sufficient to result in population growth in Metro" (70). The report considered two "alternative" regional growth distribution scenarios. The major difference between the two alternate scenarios was the role played by Metro Toronto in accommodating future growth. Scenario One, based on much more aggressive intensification policies, had Metro Toronto accommodate a larger component of growth than the reference forecast. Scenario Two was based on a distribution of regional growth consistent with patterns found in other major urban centres elsewhere in the Western world. Essentially, this scenario assumed that current trends would continue and that very little new population growth would occur within Metro.

Table 3-2 shows the distribution of population forecasted for the alternate scenarios. It shows that in scenario one, Metro is expected to accommodate 2.7 million people, just over 40 percent of a GTA total of 6.67 million in 2021. In scenario two, Metro achieves a population of only 2.32 million, or under 35 percent of the total expected population of the GTA for 2021. It is interesting to note that for most regional municipalities, the difference between Hemson's reference or trend scenario and the "aggressive intensification" scenario is very small.

Table 3-2: GTA 2021 Population Projections by Region (000s)

	Metro	Peel	York	Durham	Halton	GTA
Reference	2,410	1,320	1,290	970	670	6,670
Scenario one	2,700	1,260	1,110	950	650	6,670
Scenario two	2,320	1,350	1,320	1,000	690	6,670

Source: Hemson 1993.

Soon after the publication of the Hemson report, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs announced that it had accepted Scenario One as the basis for regional land use planning in the GTA.

Table 3-3 compares Hemson's 1993 reference and scenario one projections with IBI spread

Table 3-3: Hemson and IBI GTA Population Distribution Projections, 2021 (000s)

	Hemson Reference	Regional Dist (%)	Hemson Scenario 1	Regional Dist (%)	IBI spread	Regional Dist (%)	IBI Nodal	Regional Dist (%)
Metro	2,410	36	2,700	40	2,428	40	2,800	20%
Peel	1,320	20	1,260	19	1,198	20	1190	13%
York	1,290	19	1,110	17	1,007	17	804	11%
Durham	970	15	950	14	794	13	681	9 %
Halton	670	10	650	10	593	10	545	100 %
GTA	6,670	100.0	6,670	100.0	6,020	100	6,020	100

and nodal growth concepts. Noteworthy here is the fact that the "aggressive intensification" scenario in Hemson's 1993 projection gives rise to exactly the same proportion of residents living in Metro as does the "spread" scenario from the 1990 IBI projections. In 1992, the OGTA had announced widespread support for a "concentrated nodal" growth concept, implying a Metro population share of at least 47 percent of the 2021 GTA population. In 1993, the "aggressive intensification" targets had allowed Metro's share of the regional population to decline to 40 percent.

3.6 Municipal Planning Policies

3.6.1 The Municipality of Metro Toronto

The Municipality of Metro Toronto is the upper-tier government at the core of the region, which comprises about half the metropolitan population. Since its inception, Metro's planning and investment activities have been important in helping a regional structure emerge, one based on higher-density development adjacent to transit facilities and sub-centre development. Central to this was the 1980 Urban Structure Plan (Metroplan), which called for a hierarchy of urban centres supported by rapid transit. While the plan also called for an increase in the rate of supply and diversity of housing types, it did not make explicit links between urban structure and housing targets. And although Metroplan saw the link between transit and density in sub-centres, it appeared to overlook the importance of intensifying the transit corridors themselves.

3.6.1.1 Official Plan Review

Metro Toronto emerged as a champion of intensification in the latter half of the 1980s, when it unilaterally undertook its own residential intensification studies as part of its official plan review process. The official plan review process involved a number of public consultations and policy reports on residential intensification (1987a; 1987b; 1989a; 1989b; 1989c). Among the key recommendations were:

- redevelopment of obsolete commercial and industrial areas, underdeveloped sites within mixed-use nodes and centres, and within 750 metres of rapid transit stations
- a Main Street program to increase densities in low-density areas along arterials
- support for accessory units across Metro.

These reports drew attention to the general desire to retain the character of existing neighbourhoods and to avoid the equation of intensification with high-rise developments. Rather, they pointed to the need for sensitivity to intensification in terms of architecture and urban design, and announced that a consultant study on density guidelines would be carried out toward this end.

The consultant study—undertaken by Berridge Lewinberg Greenberg Ltd. (BLG)—was published in two volumes in 1991: the technical report entitled *Guidelines for the Reurbanization of Metropolitan Toronto*(1991a) and a background document called *Study of the Reurbanization of Metropolitan Toronto* (1991b).

The BLG report reflected the general change in the nature of the concept of intensification in the GTA at the turn of the decade. While it had been started as an instrument for increasing housing supply in a very tight market, intensification was becoming a broader strategy to address land use problems such as environmental destruction, the balance between land use and transportation, and the fiscal inefficiency of existing development patterns.

Thus, the authors eschewed the phrase "residential intensification", instead adopting the term "reurbanization" from its European sources.[9] In contrast to intensification, reurbanization was defined as a coordinated, comprehensive approach to urban growth:

> residential intensification implies dealing only with residential uses, while reurbanization implies a much more balanced and integrated approach.... [R]esidential uses cannot and should not be considered on their own, but rather as part of a broader and more complex process of developing and extending the fabric of the city, of building community, and in terms of the changing inter-relationships between different types of land uses, such as home/workplace link (1991b, 5).

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[9] By the end of the 1980s, the word "intensification" had taken on negative connotations because of its association with social housing, basement apartments, and the spate of high-rise condos that were going up on the edges of "established neighbourhoods" all over Metro. As had "urban renewal" before it, intensification was becoming synonymous with neighbourhood disruption.

The guidelines were addressed to large-scale intensification that could contribute to the overall urban structure of Metro. They clearly stated that such intensification should not be considered in natural areas or low-density residential neighbourhoods, but should be directed to a hierarchy of centres or nodal concentrations of development, corridors, or linear concentrations of development along arterials, and to large-scale infill areas on obsolete industrial or commercial sites. These intensification areas should be exploited with a mix of land uses—including employment and retail opportunities—and a mix of housing types, including affordable housing. The Guidelines went as far as to suggest desirable development densities for the range of intensification types, from 100 residents and workers per hectare in the lower-order corridors to 1,000 per hectare in major centres. It recommended that a gross density of 80 residents and workers be the minimum for all reurbanization areas within Metro. The Guidelines report was never formally adopted by Metro council, but a revised version has served informally to help planners evaluate development proposals in Metro.

Around this time, Metro also began a process of setting population targets for the metropolitan municipality as a whole and its component municipalities. In 1989, Metro adopted a population target of 2.5 million by 2011. This was thought to require about 300,000 new housing units. As a vehicle to build consensus around implementation of the population and housing targets, Metro set up a Special Housing Committee in 1990. The committee, which met until 1991, was comprised of Metro councillors and representatives of area municipal councils.

An important aspect of the plan review process was the development of the Metro Main Streets Program. When first proposed by a Metro Councillor, Richard Gilbert, in 1987, the Main Streets notion had several objectives: to address the housing crisis in Toronto, to create more urban, high-quality environments in the city with a more vital street life, and to help the city achieve its growth objectives without affecting the liveability of adjacent residential neighbourhoods or threatening the city's industrial areas (Skelly 1993).

Metro conducted a number of studies to investigate the feasibility of the main streets idea in 1990, including an economic feasibility study and a parking needs study. It also undertook the Main Street Pilot Project, which studied a number of sites within Metro for their main street potential. One such site was the Long Branch Project in the City of Etobicoke. The Metro Official Plan (1994) defines main street development as:

> street oriented, predominantly medium-density development... for residential, commercial or a mix of residential and commercial use, in an area comprised of an overall mix of uses. Main street development generally exhibits the following characteristics: reasonably continuous building facades which may also include parks or other spaces, multi-storied retail uses typically at grade, urban design elements to facilitate both pedestrian activity and transit use, and alternatives to on-site parking along the building frontages.

The purpose of the pilot project was to "determine whether creative regulatory changes, design approaches and economic strategies, responsive to local conditions, have the potential to generate main street development that is economically viable and acceptable to the local community." A number of public consultations, charettes and consultant reports have been

undertaken toward this end. A community vision has been elaborated and Metro, in conjunction with the City of Etobicoke and local stakeholders, is moving ahead with implementation (Metro Toronto 1995).

3.6.1.2 Metro Toronto's New Official Plan

The 1994 official plan for Metro Toronto gathered up many of the intensification initiatives and policies described above. It was based on the twin notions of reurbanization and urban structure. Reurbanization would be promoted by concentrating new development in centres and corridors, which were designated on a map. The aim was an urban structure that:

- uses land, infrastructure and other services efficiently
- concentrates employment and population in areas well served by transit
- promotes living close to work, walking and cycling and the use of transit and other high-occupancy vehicles
- facilitates social interaction, public safety and cultural and economic activity
- strengthens the vitality and identity of Metro Toronto.

The centres corresponded exactly to those proposed by the OGTA urban form exercise: three major nodes (in addition to the central node in the City of Toronto) and 10 intermediate nodes. In terms of spatial location, there was an almost perfect correspondence between the two documents: the major centres corresponded precisely, while only one intermediate centre on Metro's plan was in a different location. In terms of densities, there is a rough correspondence between the two plans, with major nodes at a maximum of 1000 residents and jobs per hectare, intermediate nodes at about 550 and local nodes at about 300.

Metro's plan also designates certain arterial streets as metropolitan reurbanization corridors, which would promote intensification within 500 metres of subway stations, linear intensification along arterials with higher-order transit service, and a mix of uses. Other areas were designated for main street development.

The plan also addresses the thorny issue of industrial land redevelopment. It proposes that other land uses be allowed within industrial areas and that area municipalities rezone industrial areas for residential use where the rezoning does not result in land uses incompatible with remaining industrial areas.

Housing policies in the plan encourage area municipalities to respond to the requirements of the Housing Policy Statement by requiring them to create opportunities for at least 25 percent of new units as affordable housing, and to allow accessory apartments, infill and redevelopment.

The population objective of 2.5 million was retained, but, interestingly, the housing objective was dropped from 300,000 to 200-245,000 new units. This reflected the intense conflict over

intensification objectives between Metro and some area municipalities that believed very high housing targets were unattainable, given the low level of demand through the early 1990s and the level of community opposition to intensification projects.

3.6.1.3 Discussion

This review of intensification policies of the Metro level of government shows that Metro is not only positively reacting to provincial policy initiatives and the metropolitan visions put forward by the OGTA, but is independently pursuing intensification for its own reasons. Metro has greater planning independence from area municipalities than its upper-tier counterparts elsewhere in Ontario because most members are directly elected.

Nonetheless, Metro's plan faces some significant challenges:

- the population and housing targets, and the urban structure envisioned by the plan can only be achieved if major transportation infrastructure investments are made
- effective controls on suburban sprawl are needed to direct population growth to Metro
- resistance to intensification from certain area municipalities within Metro must be addressed
- the redevelopment potential of large sites—mostly industrial land—is limited by soil contamination issues and political reluctance to rezone industrial land to residential use because of assessment loss
- there may not be sufficient demand for new housing in Metro to support the population projections
- some large scale projects have been resisted by Metro on the grounds that infrastructure is not adequate to handle the increased load (Feldman 1995).

3.6.2 The City of Toronto

The City of Toronto is generally considered to be a leader in intensification policies in the region. The main benefits of intensification for the City of Toronto include increasing the assessment base, regaining lost population, reducing commuting into the city from the fringe, and making better use of existing public infrastructure.[10] Residential intensification is a principle objective of the City of Toronto's new official plan:

> it is the policy of Council, subject to due consideration of neighbourhood compactibiliy, to promote the more intensive development of the existing urban area,

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[10] A study done by the City on the relationship between housing and transportation showed that each new housing unit in the city means 1.2 fewer daily commuting trips (Nowlan, 1991).

> particularly through the process of residential intensification in the city (City of Toronto 1992, 1.1).

The official plan sets a population goal of 725,000 by the year 2011, and calls for 45,000 new dwelling units to be built within the city by 2001, 35,000 of which should be located in the Central Area. These numbers correspond closely to the nodal concept originally proposed by the Office for the Greater Toronto Area. Of these new units, the city would like to see 22,500, or 50 percent, meet the provincial affordable housing guideline.

Over the last 30 years, the intensification strategy of the city has changed dramatically. In the 1950s and 1960s, residential areas near transportation nodes such as subway stations and highway access points were designated for high-density redevelopment (e.g., St. James Town near Parliament and Bloor). The planning philosophy behind these projects—that large sections of stable residential neighbourhoods should be expropriated, razed and replaced with apartment buildings—proved to be highly controversial.

The new planning philosophy that emerged in the mid-1970s embraced a respect for existing neighbourhoods and steered residential development into less disruptive forms, the most important of which was the redevelopment of obsolete industrial or commercial sites. Planners favoured such sites because the land was already assembled and serviced, was generally near cultural amenities and community facilities, and was well served by transportation links. The high densities that are usually permitted on such lands helped make the projects more financially attractive to developers and financiers.

The outstanding example of industrial land redevelopment in this period was the St. Lawrence Community, located on derelict industrial land south-east of the city core. By inner-city standards, it was a huge redevelopment project of 20 hectares. It was designed to fit into, and complete, the surrounding urban fabric and to look like a traditional Toronto neighbourhood including red brick row-houses, a mix of uses, and a typical downtown road pattern.

The redevelopment of the Massey-Ferguson site in the Niagara neighbourhood carried this form of intensification into the 1980s. And in the 1990s, large-scale redevelopment of industrial land still holds the greatest intensification potential for the city. The West Don Lands (formerly known as the Ataritiri site) on the east side of the downtown area, the King/Spadina area on the west side of downtown, the railway lands and Garrison Common near the waterfront, and the Junction Triangle and the Stockyards in the west end, have all been zoned or are under consideration for zoning as residential or mixed-use areas.

There are however, some serious policy constraints to redevelopment of industrial lands: the escalating costs of meeting the province's environmental standards (soil remediation and flood proofing) have made some projects prohibitively expensive. Furthermore, city council has expressed its desire to retain industrial lands as part of the assessment base because tax revenue on industrial and commercial land is higher per hectare than on residential land.

Another form of intensification that is proceeding in the City of Toronto is the conversion of office buildings to residential use. This is an attractive intensification option for a variety of

reasons: the reuse of existing building stock preserves heritage, reduces development costs and times, and makes efficient use of existing infrastructure.

The City of Toronto was also deeply interested in translating the main streets idea being advocated by Metro Toronto into regulatory changes that would give it concrete form. By creating a regulatory framework that would encourage property owners to redevelop their sites and by adding further residential storeys on top of existing buildings, it was hoped that new housing units could be added to the city's stock without the need for expensive new infrastructure and municipal services (City of Toronto 1989).

The main streets concept underwent significant changes in its six-year evolution. It began in 1988 as a proposal for as-of-right zoning for higher-density residential development above retail with no provisions for parking. The bylaw that was eventually passed in 1994 required planning approval, limited building densities and heights, and mandated parking except in the smallest developments. The diluted nature of the final bylaw combined with a number of other factors to block progress on implementing the main streets vision: fragmented land ownership makes site assembly difficult, the motivation to create rental housing is low due to rent control, units above retail are not in big demand, and there may be quality-of-life issues such as noise and vibration from street vehicles. By 1996, few main streets project were being undertaken and optimism for the program's intensification potential in the City of Toronto had significantly dimmed.

Unlike other municipalities in the GTA, the City of Toronto allows basement apartments in most zones of the city. Almost 19,000 residential buildings (or about 18 percent of the city's housing stock) have been converted to include secondary units, most of them legal (Spence 1994). Small-scale infill development continues, but has little potential to contribute to the city's intensification objectives.

3.6.2.1 Discussion

Notwithstanding the constraints identified above, policies are in place to permit large-scale intensification in the City of Toronto. Yet development activity in 1996 was at a low ebb, raising a legitimate concern about the ability of the city to reach its population targets. Meeting the goal of 245,000 housing units between 1991 and 2011 would require 12,000 unit completions a year, three time the number experienced by the city at the height of the boom in the latter half of the 1980s.

3.6.3 Other Metro Municipalities

There has been a great deal of planning activity around the issue of intensification in Metro's suburban municipalities. This section will describe policies meant to address issues related to housing supply and location, and those that support the development of an urban structure.

3.6.3.1 Housing Intensification Policies

Metro's suburban municipalities have adopted policies promoting residential intensification for the following reasons:

- increase the supply of housing units to meet housing targets
- diversify the housing stock to meet the needs of all socio-economic groups in the municipal population
- attract investment in housing to the municipality
- increase employment opportunities in the municipality
- revitalize commercial areas
- increase the availability of affordable housing
- encourage public transit use.

Although their policies generally support provincial intensification policies, official plans in Metro lay out policies that set conditions for acceptable intensification:

- the site is physically suitable for housing
- services and infrastructure are available to support new housing
- the character of low-density neighbourhoods is preserved
- the scale and design of the new housing is compatible with surrounding built form
- new housing will not interfere with adjacent land uses
- rezoning to residential use will not damage the assessment base of the municipality.

Planning documents reveal a common intensification strategy across Metro's suburban municipalities. Most:

- discourage large-scale intensification in low-density areas by placing stringent conditions on rezoning applications
- permit some forms of small-scale intensification in established neighbourhoods
- designate new areas for higher-density development near the edges of low-density neighbourhoods, along corridors and in designated centres, where infrastructure and services already exist

- ensure that new housing development in intensification areas is compatible with the built form of adjacent areas by placing conditions on rezoning applications
- permit redevelopment of industrial lands only on those sites that are clearly no longer viable and that are isolated or can be isolated from other industrial land uses
- adopt the province's goal of 25 percent affordable housing and use zoning powers and development application approval powers to enforce the target in multi-unit development projects and on a city-wide basis
- distribute assisted housing as widely as possible around the municipality
- encourage intensification in conjunction with the creation of employment uses, i.e., in mixed-use areas
- accept accessory apartments provided there is no change to the facade of the building
- set up a monitoring program to track the numbers and types of new housing.

Planners indicate that although many policies are in place to encourage intensification, these are not necessarily translated into zoning bylaws. Very few intensification areas designated on official plans are prezoned for medium and higher-density development. Thus, development applications must undergo a public process and risk being derailed by a negative neighbourhood reaction. Furthermore, the Ontario Building Code militates against the intensification of already built-up areas because it was designed with greenfield development in mind. Finally, soil remediation standards remain an issue in Metro's suburbs.

3.6.3.2 Urban Structure Policies

Urban planning in Metro has promoted the emergence of a number of employment sub-centres in Metro's suburban municipalities: Toronto's Central Area Plan of 1976, the Metroplan of 1980, and the planning policies adopted by Metro's other area municipalities. By the end of the 1980s, the sub-centre strategy was showing signs of success. Between 1983 and 1989, total employment in the central area grew by only 22.9, while in Scarborough centre, the growth was 65.2 percent, and in North York it was an astonishing 75.6 percent growth. Intermediate centres experienced significant but lower levels of growth, the greatest being at Yonge/Eglington, where 40.7 percent growth in employment was recorded over the same period. By 1989, the sub-centres accounted for almost 15 percent of Metro's total office employment, a considerable achievement, given that virtually none existed 20 years earlier (*Metro Facts* 1990).

These sub-centres have been criticized for their lack of urban design aesthetics, an imbalance in land use toward commercial and office employment, and a poor pedestrian environment. New planning activities across Metro are strengthening the planning framework in favour of an urban structure based on sub-centres with a greater mix of uses. Most plans include policies that would create more urban, livable, pedestrian-friendly, mixed-use activity nodes.

In North York, a new secondary plan, passed by council in 1993, enlarges the kilometre-long strip along Yonge Street that constituted the original "downtown" to include another half-mile north along Yonge called "uptown". The 1993 plan envisions a built-out residential and employment population of 71,500.

The Kipling-Isington City Centre was to become the preeminent centre for Etobicoke. Its location at the intersection of two main arterials (Bloor and Dundas Streets) between two subway stations, was projected to make this an important site for residential and employment intensification. Originally planned as an office centre, the area is designated for higher-density mixed-use development in a recent secondary plan. However, market conditions have resulted in only modest development in the area.

East York Centre presents significant intensification potential. The 1994 official plan amendment for the area envisions 15-20 storey buildings, including office, commercial and residential. The York City Centre has also been designated a central area in the city's official plan. The area has a great deal of publicly owned land, and a GO Station and a subway are planned for the site. However, the province's 1996 decision to cancel the subway extension to the site will undoubtedly postpone the emergence of a sub-centre here.

Area municipal plans are also being revised to contain policies to define and encourage local centres at major intersections with good transit availability, as suggested by both the OGTA framework and the new Metro plan. In North York, for instance, 14 local sub-centres are designated in the 1994 official plan amendment, at densities consistent with those suggested by the OGTA urban form group and the Metro plan.

Arterial intensification is the centrepiece of the intensification strategy adopted by Metro's suburban municipalities.[11] In most municipalities, city planners have identified reurbanization corridors based on infrastructure availability (sewer trunks, transit, parks, sewage storage capacity) and have proposed development control guidelines to encourage mixed-use development, usually of three to five storeys.

A review of recently amended or revised lower-tier plans shows that the arterials designated for intensification generally correspond with the metropolitan corridors or main streets designation at the Metro Toronto level. In North York, for instance, there is a good overlap in designated arterials, with discrepancies amounting to only about 10 percent.

While the sub-centres and corridors approach is strongly supported by planners across Metro, there are some constraints to the realization of this strategy. For sub-centres, the greatest

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[11] Arterial intensification involves the redevelopment of arterial roads to create higher-density, mixed-use streetscapes that will support transit and accommodate changing needs of the community without threatening established residential areas. The main difference between the main streets concept and arterial intensification is the nature of the existing arterial streets. More urban areas, or areas that had a traditional "high street", can achieve the more traditional version of a main street because the elements and the history exist. The more suburban areas will have a different focus: they can have a reasonably continuous building frontage, a better balance of land uses, improved pedestrian environment and good transit service, but the width, set-backs, and limited access points will still be characteristic of suburban arterial roads.

constraint is posed by the lack of transportation facilities to support high-density functions, especially in East York and York. Most important to arterial intensification are the servicing standards imposed by provincial, regional and municipal transportation and engineering departments. Metro's arterials serve as throughways for suburban commuters outside Metro. Because these roads carry a great deal of non-local traffic during rush hours, transportation planners insist that they be designed to accommodate these peak loads. But wider roadways, limited access points, reduced on-street parking, higher speeds and volumes all contribute to less livable, less walkable, and more polluted neighbourhoods, and therefore militate against the reurbanization concept. Another constraint is parking standards: although municipal planners usually would like to reduce standards because they assume that residents in intensification areas will rely more on transit than automobiles, resident groups usually insist on higher standards to prevent newcomers from parking in their neighbourhoods. Weak market demand for housing and office space in Metro's suburban municipalities has also raised doubts about the feasibility of intensifying both sub-centres and corridors.

3.6.3.3 Discussion

Recent planning documents in Metro's suburban municipalities clearly reflect considerable intensification pressures. This is the result of the onslaught of developer applications in the late 1980s, the continuing applications for rezoning of commercial land to residential development, and the impact of provincial and Metro intensification policies and housing targets.

Area planners perceive intensification as inevitable, given the exhaustion of the land base. The question is how to steer it so as to reduce the negative impacts while exploiting its positive aspects. The main aim is to prevent private development pressures from disrupting existing neighbourhoods or producing uncoordinated intensification of the urban fabric. They also seek to ensure that publicly-funded developments will not be concentrated within any single district.

Many of the issues raised in the context of Metro's suburban areas were similar to those encountered in the City of Toronto. However, there are significant differences:

- industrial redevelopment is more important in the City of Toronto because of the availability of large amounts of vacant or underused industrial lands in prime locations served by high-order transit
- while accessory apartments have been an extremely controversial issue in Metro's suburban municipalities, they have long been accepted in Toronto
- the relative lack of higher-order transit reduces the intensification potential of suburban centres
- certain forms of intensification opportunities are more available in Metro's suburbs than in the City of Toronto, especially mixed-use developments above shopping centres

- the fall-off in the production of new housing has been more severe in Metro's suburban municipalities: e.g., Scarborough went from 4,448 starts in 1988 to only 586 in 1993 and Etobicoke fell from over 1500 units in 1988 to just 344 in 1993. In the City of Toronto, the decline was relatively gentle, from 3,970 in 1988 to 1,453 in 1993. This means that it may be more difficult to realize the intensification opportunities being created through local planning efforts in suburban areas.

3.6.4 Suburban Municipalities

A great deal of provincial planning effort has been directed at preventing sprawl in the suburban areas of the GTA outside Metro Toronto. This section looks at three aspects of suburban intensification: growth management, housing intensification, and urban structure policies.

3.6.4.1 Growth Management

The key vehicle for implementing provincial growth management objectives is the upper-tier regional plan. In approving the upper-tier plans, the Ministry of Municipal Affair's planning approvals branch sets a series of "land budgeting" goals based on the policy framework:

- incorporate the OGTA population objectives into the regional official plans
- increase densities for greenfield development
- increase the proportion of new population accommodated through intensification as opposed to greenfield development.

3.6.4.1.1 Population targets

Table 3-4 gives some information about population projections in the region. The OGTA's Reference Scenario and Scenario 1 (i.e., the intensification scenario) are shown along with the numbers appearing in the regional official plans. The key figures are in the final column, indicating whether the regional official plans have met the OGTA population targets for Scenario 1. The table shows that only two of the four upper-tier plans have incorporated the OGTA targets.

Table 3-4: Comparison of GTA Population Targets

	Year	OGTA Reference	OGTA Scenario 1	ROP	ROP - Scenario 1
Peel	2021	1.324	1.255	1.328	+0.073
York	2021	1.287	1.107	1.100	-0.007
Durham	2021	0.969	.952	0.970	+0.018
Halton	2011	0.547	0.534	0.530	-0.004

Deviations are significant in two cases, Peel and Durham, where the population projections incorporated into official planning documents are higher than the OGTA targets. In York Region, the population figure was under review in 1996 because a number of area municipalities wanted higher targets. If all increases are given, it would raise the York number approximately half way to the Reference Forecast from its current level. This would leave only Halton with a plan that substantively reflects the OGTA population targets.

3.6.4.1.2 Minimum densities

The Ministry's objective was to have regional official plans incorporate minimum density objectives for all new development. A level of 25 units per hectare (uph) gross density was initially considered in negotiations with Durham, but the goal was eventually reduced to only 17 uph. However, provincial planners were unsuccessful in convincing regional officials to formally incorporate minimum densities into their official plans. None of the plans incorporated clearly stated minimum densities to be achieved in new developments.

In two cases, minimum densities were incorporated into official plans in subtle ways. In Durham's case, the regional plan states that "over time, the density of new development will continue to increase" but does not assign any numerical targets. According to regional staff, however, a target of 17 uph is considered to be a "background assumption" of the plan and will be used when considering lower-tier municipal plans, plan amendments, and plans of subdivision.

In York Region, density targets are also subtly expressed. Rather than being explicitly stated in the official plan, minimum densities are implied by a "sidebar illustration". The sidebars suggests that a typical new community would have a gross density of about 15 uph. Because this is not formally stated in the plan, however, it is not considered an official target.

In Peel Region, target densities for new development are not expressed in the regional plan, but there is a planning assumption that densities will be in the order of 23 uph, including residential lots and the internal road pattern, but excluding parks, schools and major arterials. Once these land uses are included, the resulting densities would be about 15 uph.

Although these density targets represent a significant change from conventional development patterns in suburban areas, several caveats are in order. First, the densities are not much higher than those already being achieved through the action of market forces in some suburban areas in the GTA. Secondly, the definition of gross density being used by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and the regional planning bodies excludes land protected by a variety of provincial policies. This means that even if the pressures on regional officials to achieve higher gross densities are effective, what are sometimes called the super-gross densities, including environmental take-outs, may remain roughly constant.

3.6.4.1.3 Intensification targets

More successful from the provincial perspective has been the province's attempt to get regional official plans to incorporate intensification objectives. However, here too, success has

been qualified. The Ministry's goal was for each regional plan to contain policies directing that a minimum of 20 percent of new growth would be achieved through intensification. Thus, designation of new land for development would be sufficient to accommodate a maximum of 80 percent of the expected population growth of the region.

In two cases, a 20 percent intensification objective has been included in the plan, with land budgets adjusted accordingly. The Durham Official Plan, for instance, states that "Intensification is encouraged within existing urban areas. Further, as an overall target, the Region, in conjunction with the area municipalities, will plan to accommodate approximately 20 percent of all new population growth through intensification."

The 20 percent intensification target has also been expressed in the official plan for the Region of York. Halton's plan implies an intensification objective of over half of new development. In Peel, the official plan does not include any intensification objectives.

Although the 20 percent "intensification target" was met or superseded in three of the four plans, the meaning of "intensification" for this purpose was unclear. An analysis of the working definition being developed in Durham shows that intensification claims are clearly inflated. Intensification, according to this definition, refers to development on land that was "built up" as of June 5, 1991, the date of the adoption of Durham's official plan. The meaning of "built up" here is critical: it refers to any land that had any structure on it at the time, even if it was a single house on five hectares of land.

Thus, greenfield development at any density will be counted as "intensification" as long as it occurs within the previously existing boundary. There is no reason to doubt that this will become the standard for judging the 20 percent intensification goal adopted by Durham, York and Halton. In Halton Region, approximately 54 percent of new growth will be accommodated within the urban boundary established in the 1980 official plan, but this includes 38 percent to be accommodated on vacant land and only 16 percent in the already built-up area. Thus, the intensification target for this region—using the conventional definition of the word—is only 16 percent. This figure is probably above existing trends, but it is difficult to judge the magnitude of the difference.

3.6.4.2 Housing Intensification Policies

Municipal planners in suburban areas reported that the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and the Ministry of Housing exercised strong influence in favour of housing intensification policies at the local level. The Housing Policy Statement was cited as the single most important provincial policy in this regard, but the Residents' Rights Act of 1994 and the non-profit housing projects funded by the Ministry of Housing were also considered important. No one cited the Growth and Settlement Guidelines or the Transit-Supportive Guidelines. The OGTA was perceived to be in favour of intensification, although its influence seems less pronounced than that of provincial policies.

Area municipalities also reported that policies of the upper-tier municipalities were having some impact, citing non-profit housing corporations in Halton, Peel, York, and Durham as

purveyors of more affordable, higher-density housing. Moreover, upper-tier housing studies and intensification studies (to meet requirements of the provincial Housing Policy Statement) were actively encouraging intensification at the local level. All of the new upper-tier official plans contain housing policies meant to encourage area municipalities to adopt intensification policies. In general, however, upper-tier policies were thought to be less pro-intensification than provincial policies.

At the area municipal level, a large number of policies and policy initiatives could be cited in favour of intensification. Many suburban municipalities have undertaken Municipal Housing Statements, funded by the provincial government and responding to the province's Housing Policy Statement. These statements outline the municipality's objectives in providing for a range of housing types and usually include information about target housing unit mixes, densities and the criteria for evaluating intensification projects (Orangeville, Richmond Hill, Vaughan, Whitby, Newcastle, Uxbridge, Oakville).

Municipal Housing Statements usually serve as the basis for official plan sections on housing. Some municipalities have also undertaken intensification studies, which are used to identify intensification opportunities in specific areas of the municipality, e.g., along a particular corridor (Vaughan), or on a municipal-wide basis (Mississauga, Newmarket). Many municipalities in the GTA have undertaken official plan reviews or major amendments in order to incorporate the recommendations of theses studies (Whitby, Ajax, Oshawa, Newcastle, Uxbridge, Whitchurch-Stouville, Oakville, Pickering).

Since 1990, area municipalities in the GTA have been intensely active on revising their official plans. Fourteen of the 24 suburban municipalities have undertaken major plan amendments or completely revised their official plans. This has provided ample opportunity to respond to provincial planning policies. A review of official plans in the region shows that municipalities have generally:

- adopted planning statements endorsing intensification objectives
- identified some areas where medium- and higher-density housing will be permitted, usually along arterial roads, in designated urban nodes, or on obsolete industrial sites
- require a better mix of housing types and permitted smaller lot frontages in new development areas
- declared that at least 25-30 percent of new residential units will be affordable
- adopted policies permitting basement apartments.

These policies have in some cases been translated into rezonings to increase densities (Orangeville, Pickering, Whitby, Whitchurch-Stouville) or into secondary plans of existing areas to provide for intensification or infill (Richmond Hill, Oakville, Pickering, Mississauga).

The Toronto case study region is remarkable in the wide array of municipal planning policies in favour of intensification in suburban areas. There is no doubt that provincial polices are

largely responsible for this trend, and that they have had a significant impact on municipal planning policies. However, there is some doubt about the efficacy of these policies. There is ample evidence that municipalities in the region have adopted a number of strategies to reduce the planning impact of the provincial policy objectives, especially those relating directly to intensification policies. Many of them:

- avoid designating existing neighbourhoods for different forms of intensification as required by provincial policy.
- direct intensification pressures to the edges of neighbourhoods, along arterials, and in emerging nodes or centres of higher-density, mixed-use development
- adopt firm statements supporting provincial objectives in the preface to official plans, but only vague language in the legal text
- openly challenge unpopular provincial policy objectives, e.g., the legalization of secondary suites.

The importance of provincial policies in promoting intensification policies at the local level is also brought into doubt by the contention of many local planners that market changes had already reduced the demand for large lot singles, and that developers were responding to a more diverse market by applying for rezonings to higher-density housing. It could be argued that this move toward higher-density and more affordable housing was, at least in part, driven by developers rather than by provincial policy-makers. In fact, a review of municipal plans shows that they contain intensification policies and objectives that are consistent with current market forces and seldom go beyond market trends.

Furthermore, a number of planning constraints may neutralize changes at the official plan level. In some municipalities, especially in areas furthest from Lake Ontario, limitations in servicing with water and sewage have prevented development at higher densities (Milton). In many municipalities, zoning bylaws including lot sizes, setback requirements, and minimum ground floor areas, all militate against development at higher densities (Milton, Oshawa, Ajax, Whitby, Richmond Hill, Mississauga, Orangeville, Burlington, Oakville). There is also a dearth of areas zoned for high- or medium-density housing in some cases (Pickering). Off-street parking requirements may also be so onerous as to discourage intensification of mature areas (Oshawa). Development standards are often cited as a brake on higher residential densities, e.g., road widths (Halton). Development charges are also thought to pose an added burden on intensification projects because they fail to exempt projects in mature areas that do not require new infrastructure.

3.6.4.3 Urban Structure Policies

An emerging urban structure vision is detectable in upper- and lower-tier plans in suburban areas of the GTA. This vision incorporates many of the principles and some of the details of the OGTA Working Group on Urban Form in its 1992 report.

However, if one combines the four suburban upper-tier urban structure plans and compares the result to the OGTA vision, several differences are apparent. The OGTA plan has 15 suburban nodes: two major (Mississauga and Oshawa) and 13 intermediate. The combined upper-tier official plans have 2.5 times that number: 33 nodes including Mississauga Square One and Oshawa.

The geographic location of the nodes is difficult to compare given the extreme generality of the OGTA urban structure plan, and the dearth of references points by which to "pin down" the suggested positions. It appears, however, that of the 15 suburban nodes suggested by the OGTA work group, 11 are represented in the regional official plans by nodes in the approximate locations suggested by the OGTA. This implies that, of the 33 suburban nodes on the combined official plan version, two-thirds or 22 are in locations not projected in the OGTA plan.

Unfortunately, given the lack of reference points in the official plans with respect to the anticipated size of the nodes, it is difficult to comment on this aspect of the proposed urban structure. The Region of York's plan, however, gives us a clue. It estimates that regional nodes would be in the order of 20-30,000 employees and 5-10,000 residents at a gross density of 4-600 residential and employees per hectare. This suggests a nodal land area of about 67 hectares, which is in line with the figure suggested in the OGTA report (i.e., up to 75 hectares for an intermediate node).

The OGTA urban structure map identifies a series of corridors linking the suburban nodes both along the Lake Ontario shore and in a half circle on the outside perimeter of Metro Toronto. The York plan designates a corridor along highway 7 that would appear to coincide with the northern link of the half-circle. It also designates a length of Yonge Street that roughly corresponds to the OGTA plan. Apart from the York Region plan, however, no regional plan designated corridors. Thus, most of the corridor concept expressed in the OGTA report remains unrealized at the upper-tier official plan level.

3.6.4.4 Discussion

The provincial policy objectives on intensification are unevenly reflected in municipal plans in suburban areas of the GTA. Municipal planning has undergone significant changes in response to the changing provincial policy environment: more attention is paid to managing growth in a fiscally and environmentally sound manner, municipalities give more consideration to housing goals in their planning decisions, and there are signs that a loose urban structure is emerging through the official planning process. However, the analysis presented here indicates that there are serious limitations on the ability of provincial policies to influence land use planning at the local level.

3.7 Recent Initiatives and Current Challenges

3.7.1 Metropolitan Governance and Planning

In the spring of 1995, several factors converged to prompt the provincial government to create a Task Force on the Greater Toronto Area. First, a number of municipalities and business groups had called for an inquiry into the tax structure of the GTA. Their primary concerns were the erosion of the tax base resulting from assessment appeals, and the incentive given by the tax system for business to flee to the suburbs. Secondly, a number of individuals and organizations had been calling for the restructuring of local government within the GTA, with proposals ranging from the creation of a new province to the establishment of a number of special boards to oversee regional services. The pressure for a new look at government came to a head with the City of Toronto's referendum during the municipal election of November 1994: a majority of voters wanted to eliminate the Metropolitan level of government altogether. The pending provincial election presented an opportunity for the government to claim it was taking action on GTA problems without having to propose any solutions—which were sure to be controversial—during the election campaign itself.

Thus, in April 1995, the Task Force on the Future of the GTA was formed, made up of five community leaders including the chair Anne Golden, the president of United Way of Greater Toronto. The task force's mandate was to propose ways to arrest the further decline of the central city and to resolve the governance, fiscal and infrastructure financing issues dogging the region. The report of the task force was issued in January 1996.

The major recommendations of the task force fell into five main categories: regional tax pooling, the reorganization of municipal services, the reform of the property tax assessment system, the creation of a Greater Toronto Council, and the need for regional planning. The last two will serve as the focus for the following discussion.

The task force recommended that the five existing upper-tier governments in the GTA be abolished and replaced by a new Greater Toronto Council (GTC). The council would be comprised of the mayor of each municipality with a population of 100,000 or more, plus another councillor from municipalities with populations greater than 140,000, and a further councillor for each multiple of 140,000. In addition, electoral districts would be created, regrouping municipalities with populations of less than 100,000. These would choose a representative from one local council to sit on the GTC. Each of the 30 Greater Toronto Councillors would have one vote.

The new GTC would have somewhat fewer powers to control physical development than the current upper-tier municipalities it was to replace. It would be responsible for regional planning, economic development, and the construction and maintenance of regionally significant highways. The GTC would coordinate the activities of so-called flexible service districts for the provision of non-local services such as transit, water, and sewage treatment. The task force hoped that this would allow for region-wide planning and coordination by the GTC, while ensuring that services were delivered on a more local basis. The GTC would not

have jurisdiction over arterial roads and adjacent land uses, which would instead be transferred to local municipalities.

The strongest support for a metropolitan-wide government comes from Metro Toronto, itself under attack from its area municipalities as obsolete or in need of fundamental reform. Metro would like to see the GTA governed by a single upper-tier council much in its own image. In fact, Metro was disappointed with the recommendations for indirect elections of the GTC. Metro is suspicious of placing executive powers in the hands of a council made up of "a sub-committee of GTA mayors," who are notorious for parochialism on issues of regional importance. It supports a single, strong GTA-wide government with all the powers currently enjoyed by upper-tier regions.

Few other municipal governments in the region have endorsed the GTC idea. The City of Toronto and North York have denounced it, and suburban municipalities have shown themselves to be extremely wary of a regional authority that would give 17 of 32 votes to Metro's municipalities. Smaller suburban municipalities have objected to the notion of a regional government on the grounds that they would have weak representation. For instance, in Durham region, only Oshawa would be guaranteed a seat on the GTC, raising questions about accountability and representation. Rural municipalities are even less interested in the "supercity" concept and prefer to maintain existing upper-tier regional municipalities that subsidize their hard and soft infrastructure development. The strongest opposition to the GTC has come from the suburban upper-tier governments—Durham, York, Peel, and Halton—who would be completely eliminated in favour of the GTC.

In terms of regional planning, the task force recommended that the GTC take responsibility for creating a regional plan that included land supply, urban boundaries, urban structure, a Greater Toronto transportation strategy coordinated with urban structure objectives, and a regional greenlands system. It would also be responsible for the planning of major infrastructure projects, including setting priorities for competing investments options.

There appears to be widespread support for planning on a regional scale. Where the dispute lies is in the choice of the appropriate institution to deliver regional planning and in regional planning goals. The need for infrastructure planning to support anticipated population and employment growth in the region is widely agreed upon. Beyond this, the consensus breaks down. Only Metro fully supports the notion that growth should be directed toward the urban core. Suburban municipalities adjacent to Metro would like to prevent further sprawl but reject the implied responsibility to build at much higher densities than is conventionally the case, and rural municipalities are positively opposed to restricting growth to the already urbanized areas of the region.

Because of the intense controversy surrounding some of the task force's proposals, the Ontario government set up a review panel to gauge public opinion on the most important recommendations. The panel found that there was little support for regional government anywhere in the GTA. Most observers agreed that the task force's tax reform proposal was the most likely component of the reform package to be put into effect in the near future.

3.7.2 Metropolitan Transportation Planning

By the latter half of the 1980s, it was clear that the Toronto region had been "coasting" on major transportation investments in subways, commuter trains and highways made in the 1950s and 1960s. Although they had served the area well, they were not able to keep up with population growth and deconcentration to suburban areas less well served by previous investments. The result was a losing battle against congestion, especially on roads crossing the boundaries of Metro Toronto.

In 1986, the provincial government established a regional Transportation Planning Forum, which brought together provincial and local officials to conduct a comprehensive review of regional transportation needs. This helped guide provincial investment in the region: In 1988, the province decided to move ahead with the east-west 407 expressway north of Toronto, and in 1990, the Liberal government announced its "Let's Move" transportation infrastructure plan for the Toronto area, projecting a $5 billion provincial investment over a 20-year period. Transit projects included the TTC's proposals to expand its rapid transit system to support Metro's sub-centres. The NDP government that succeeded the Liberals in 1990 endorsed the plan in principle, stepped up work on the 407 highway, began the major extensions to the subway system in Metro, and promised expanded GO service. The Conservatives, who succeeded the NDP in 1995, have continued with the 407 but have postponed indefinitely one of the subway expansions and cancelled the GO Transit enhancements.

In 1991, the OGTA created the Provincial-Municipal Working Group on Infrastructure to look at transportation needs for the region as a whole. The group reported in 1992, recommending that a regional transportation plan should link land use and transportation investment along the following lines (OGTA 1992b):

- identify a hierarchy of nodes and corridors based on public transit
- maximize use of infrastructure and investments in land and buildings within nodes and corridors
- channel highest densities of residential development and employment development to locations where high frequency transit is available
- identify strategic transfer points as places to concentrate a range of multiple uses.

Two years later, however, the region still had no overall transportation plan linking land use goals and infrastructure development. Nonetheless, expectations had been raised by the OGTA-led process, and in 1994, the province set up a long-term planning exercise in partnership with the GTA's upper-tier governments. Preliminary documents show that a GTA tranportation plan must "clearly reflect the inter-connections between the way we use and settle land in our communities and the form of transportation system required to service these settlement patterns" (Ministry of Transportation 1995a, 2). Among the specific goals of the planning exercise are to reduce use of single occupant vehicles and minimize the need for greenfield development.

There are three key dimensions to the regional transportation plan: demand management, the rehabilitation of the existing system, and system expansion. The control of sprawl and intensification are seen by provincial transportation planners as important aspects of managing demand and minimizing the need for system expansion. On these issues, they expect to link the transportation plan with upper-tier official plans now emerging in the region. Besides close cooperation with regional governments, the planning process will include wide-scale consultations with interest groups across the region and is scheduled for completion in late 1996 (Ministry of Transportation 1995b).

3.7.3 Improving Transit Integration

In 1996, there were 17 transit systems in the GTA, including the province's commuter rail and bus service called GO Transit, two transit systems operated by upper-tier municipalities, and 14 operated by area municipalities. No regional entity coordinates the delivery of transit services, does regional transit planning, or prioritizes capital spending needs for the region. One result has been a decline in transit use relative to car use as growth in the suburban areas outside Metro continues.

In June 1993, the province created the GTA Transit Integration Task Force with a mandate to advise the Minister on how to remove barriers to the movement of people from one transit system to another within the GTA. The 21 members of the task force included management and labour from area transit systems, university researchers, mayors of the municipalities and transit advocates. The goal was to increase ridership and reduce car dependency in the region (GTA Perspectives 1993-94).

The task force issued its final report in early 1994. The report rejected the amalgamation of transit delivery, opting for the creation of a single policy body to ensure a common approach to service provision. Toward this end, the task force recommended that a "limited purpose transit federation" be established by the province and be responsible for coordination of seamless service by municipal and provincial transit providers, the implementation of cross-boundary fare integration, and coordination of capital planning. In the meantime, the task force recommended that short-term measures be taken to improve service on specific routes crossing municipal boundaries, introduce a weekly GTA transit pass, and set up a GTA customer information service (Transit Integration Task Force 1994).[12]

Two years after the task force was wound up, some accomplishments can be reported: a GTA-wide transit map and a telephone information service. However, the transit federation, which was to be in operation by January 1996, has not yet emerged. The GTA transit pass was created, but no discount was offered to users, so sales have been very weak. Negotiations

[12] Interesting, although the mandate of the task force was to help reduce car dependency in the region, no recommendations were made to link transit provision to land use. The task force refused to consider incorporating the province's transit supportive guidelines into its report as a way of addressing auto-dependent suburban planning practices, or to propose an urban growth boundary for the region.

on coordinating service on specific cross-boundary routes (such as between Metro and Mississauga) have broken down in recriminations.

3.7.4 Reforming Development Standards

The reform of development standards has been identified frequently over the years as a method of achieving more compact and affordable housing. Developers and builders have consistently drawn attention to the role of development standards in raising the price of housing in Ontario. In 1976 the Ministry of Housing produced a study, "Urban Development Standards," which recommended that net residential densities be increased from 16 units per hectare—the conventional density of new suburbs in Ontario—to 32. It also recommended that municipal development standards (e.g., for road widths) be ratcheted downwards. However, few municipalities implemented the new standards, although some elements of them were used by individual developers (Sewell 1993, 215-216).

With the housing affordability crisis in the late 1980s and the renewed attention to the efficiency of land use in the early 1990s, the province rekindled its interest in reforming development standards. A study done for the OGTA concluded that one of the reasons for the decline in gross densities of development in the postwar era was the gradual ratcheting up of development standards. Changing standards for schools, highway interchanges, road widths, parks, and stormwater management have increased land consumption over the last few decades. As a result, up to 50 percent of developable land areas is devoted to these uses, compared to 35-40 percent in older communities (Lehman & Associates 1995).

In 1993, the Ministries of Housing and Municipal Affairs commissioned a consulting team to produce provincial guidelines to assist municipalities with alternative development standards. An advisory committee representing municipalities, planners, engineers, builders, developers, architects, utility companies and environmentalists was also set up. A final report entitled "Making Choices: Alternative Development Standards" was released in 1995.

The guidelines were designed to encourage affordable and compact urban form, especially in new greenfield development, but also in the redevelopment of already built-up areas. The standards include both engineering issues such as the placement of above and below ground utilities, storm drainage, water distribution, and planning issues such as lot and road widths and setback requirements.

The alternative standards exercise has already had one concrete result: the Ministry of Transportation has revised its road subsidy policy. A minimum pavement width of 8.5 metres is no longer required for a road to be eligible for subsidy, giving Ontario's municipalities the freedom to choose smaller rights of way in the design of neighbourhoods. Furthermore, a small number of municipalities and developers across Ontario have shown interest in the alternative standards. In the GTA, only two developers have experimented with alternative standards, one of which was the Ministry of Housing, the agency behind the standards. The Ministry of Housing is developing Cornell in Markham and Seaton Village in Pickering; the River Oaks Group is building Morrison Village in Oakville and Montgomery Village in Orangeville.

Interviews with developers and planners involved in the use of alternative development standards reveal that there are powerful forces militating against change. Attempts to use the more land-efficient standards have run up against the body of codes that are embedded in the practices of planning, public works, parks and engineering professionals. Municipal transportation engineers resist reductions in road rights-of-way and the introduction of lanes (which allows frontages to be reduced), parks departments object to smaller parkettes, school authorities do not like to see their school yards reduced in size, and legal departments frequently raise the paralyzing liability questions that the use of innovative housing designs and development standards may involve.

The fact that they have been released as guidelines rather than as provincial policy means that application of these alternative standards is purely voluntary on the part of municipalities and developers. It is still too early to tell whether alternative development standards will be widely adopted, but there are clearly significant barriers to their general diffusion.

3.7.5 Reforming Soil Standards

Industrial land redevelopment, a major source of intensification potential in the region, has largely been frustrated by soil remediation standards. The recent history of soil remediation standards is complex. In 1989, the Ministry of the Environment and Energy released its "Guidelines for the Decommissioning and Clean-up of Sites in Ontario." These provided standards for each of 22 potential contaminants, essentially requiring that sites be cleansed down to the bedrock. This was the case regardless of land use. Even where potable water was not being extracted from the ground, the guidelines required the complete decontamination of the site before development approval would be given.

In 1994, the Ministry released proposals for new guidelines, based on extensive consultation with the public and the province's own Advisory Committee on Environmental Standards. These proposed guidelines allowed standards to vary according to the use of the land, based on a risk assessment framework. These principles have been incorporated into the new guidelines, which were formerly announced in 1996.

3.7.6 Reforming the Planning System

In the fall of 1995, Ontario's new Conservative government introduced Bill 20 in the legislature, along with a new set of planning policies to replace those adopted in 1995 by the NDP. The key elements of the bill were:

- a return to the "have regard to" wording for policy statements
- repeal of the as-of-right apartments in houses provisions
- removal of the content requirements for official plans
- relaxation of provincial policies to control sprawl.

The new policies are less than half the length of the comprehensive set adopted by the NDP. The new housing policies did not require that municipalities provide opportunities for affordable housing or intensification. The affordable housing target was dropped and intensification policies were considerably diluted; municipalities were asked merely to "facilitate residential redevelopment."[13] Provisions that were desirable from the development community's point of view were retained, notably maintaining a 10-year supply of designated land and a three-year supply of residential units in draft approved or registered plans of subdivision. The new policies replaced the provision to encourage development standards that would facilitate compact and affordable residential development with a policy to encourage "cost-effective" standards.

Growth management policies were also affected: growth would still be directed to urban and rural settlement areas, but the requirement that growth occur in the form of "logical extensions" to built-up or already designated areas was dropped. Rather than regulating change on the basis of spatial criteria, the new policies emphasize economic criteria: new land for development should be designated on the basis of the efficient use of "land, resources, infrastructure and public service facilities, and avoid the need for unnecessary and/or uneconomical expansion of services and infrastructure." This wording would leave it up to municipalities to decide the most efficient spatial form for new development.

Requirements that new development be compact in form and that municipalities provide opportunities for intensification of existing areas were dropped, and provisions to support transit were considerably weakened in the new policy statements.

Environmental policies underwent significant changes:

- the new policy statement maintains the restrictions on residential development in prime agricultural areas but changes in growth management policies will probably weaken farmland protection

- restrictions on development were maintained in significant wetlands and endangered and threatened species habitat but reduced for some other natural features, including a reduction of the geographical area where the greatest restrictions apply; removal of outright restriction on development that will negatively affect groundwater recharge areas, head-waters and aquifers that have been identified as sensitive areas; and removal of the requirement that the proponent conduct an environmental impact study in areas adjacent to protected natural heritage features and areas.

3.7.6.1 Discussion

Planning reforms introduced by the NDP were strongly endorsed by environmental groups across the province. The Conservative reforms were inspired by the demands of the development community and the municipal sector who argued for less regulation and more

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[13] The word "intensification" did not appear in the new policy statements.

municipal autonomy. It is too early to say what the impact of these changes will be, but as Ruppert (1995) has argued, they are likely to shift the intensification debate away from the provincial sphere and to the local level where pro- and anti-intensification forces will confront each other in a less structured policy context.

The series of reforms that began with the major overhaul wrought by the NDP and continues with the current Conservative government has been a complicated process covering a very wide range of issues important to growth management and intensification. However, there was one significant issue that was not addressed in either the reform or the counter-reform process: regional planning in metropolitan areas. The Sewell Commission paid little attention to the question of how metropolitan-wide and local planning imperatives could be reconciled (Canadian Urban Institute 1992). The oversight might have been addressed by introducing a GTA policy statement in the comprehensive set of policies, but this opportunity was passed up by both reform packages. Although the OGTA has had such a policy statement ready to go since 1993, the province has avoided any action because of the political complexities involved in imposing another set of planning requirements on local municipalities in the region.

Rather than implement some form of metropolitan-wide planning, planning reform has been based on the principle that upper-tier municipalities will take on the responsibility for addressing provincial interests and for coordinating the growth of lower-tier municipalities. But lower-tier municipalities have much more political influence with their upper-tier counterparts than with province. Thus, if the locus of conflict over growth management and intensification is shifted to the municipal arena, disagreements are much more likely to be worked out in favour of lower-tier municipalities. This may present a further barrier to realizing compact urban form in the future.

3.7.7 Building Support for Intensification at the Local Level

Sprawl has been a relatively high-profile issue in the Toronto region since the end of the 1980s when the OGTA, developers, municipal officials, and environmentalists began to link urban form with the need for better regional infrastructure planning, fiscal issues, and environmental deterioration. Newspaper analysis shows a consistent concern with the issue from at least 1989 to the present, with the major preoccupation being the environmental impacts of sprawl, including car dependency, erosion of the farm economy and farmland, and the loss of significant environmental features such as the Oak Ridges Moraine. As the period unfolded, economic issues moved to central stage, especially the link between sprawl and the economic and social health of the core area. Sprawl has been consistently in the public mind as a result of the work of provincial commissions and agencies, especially the OGTA, the (Crombie) Commission on the Future of the Toronto Waterfront, the Sewell Commission, and the Golden task force.

The regional press has likewise covered intensification as a policy issue, especially the provincial Housing Policy Statement, the Residents' Rights Act, and the deliberations of the Sewell Commission. Attention has also been given to intensification policies contained in municipal official plans, and to specific programs, such as the City of Toronto's Main Streets Program and the adaptive reuse of office buildings.

Nonetheless, few interviewees thought that intensification was an issue of concern to the general public. As one put it: "I don't think the average person thinks about it. They might be aware that they are spending too much time commuting, that there is too much traffic congestion and that they feel alienated, but don't know why." Most felt that it was an issue among a professional class of people involved with development issues. One respondent remarked that: "This is an issue among 'professional citizens', those with an affiliation with an organization or institution, or that are activists or professionals. It's always the same people going to all the commissions and meetings." Another observed that although intensification was not a publicly recognized issue, consciousness about it had "been raised among municipal politicians, most municipal senior staff, some provincial senior staff, maybe 400 academics across the country, if that, and a lot of designers and architects."[14]

Most of the newspaper coverage of residential density issues has been related to controversies surrounding specific intensification projects and involving conflict between municipal councils, individual developers and local residents. As the nature of the controversy tends to differ depending on the location of the project within the region, the following discussion will be divided into two sections: Metro Toronto and the suburban regions beyond Metro.

3.7.7.1 Metro Toronto

The major forms of large-scale intensification in Metro were identified above as sub-centre development, arterial intensification (including Metro's and the City of Toronto's Main Streets programs), and industrial land redevelopment. Here the public response to each of these is analyzed in turn.

3.7.7.1.1 Arterial Intensification and Sub-Centre Development

Some of the difficulties experienced by the City of Toronto in implementing the main streets vision were recounted above. The final form of the Main Streets Program was largely a response to objections from neighbourhood groups representing areas adjacent to main street-designated corridors. Although many groups had initially supported the vision because it promised to divert intensification pressures away from their communities onto arterial streets, they turned against the concept as it neared implementation. Councillors representing wards containing the most resistant neighbourhood groups opposed the Main Streets Program, and the Toronto Board of Education objected on the grounds that there was insufficient capacity in the school system to meet the new demand created by the program. In particular, the board was opposed to as-of-right zoning and wanted to restrict it to areas where additional classroom space was known to be available.

The originator of the main streets concept, Richard Gilbert, has written: "The original main streets proposal would have provided for almost all of the increase in dwelling units required under the [OGTA] nodal scenario [about 120,000 units]. However, the Main Streets Program

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[14] With its bimonthly publication The Intensification Report, the Canadian Urban Institute has been central to raising the profile of the issue with urban management professionals.

approved by the [City of Toronto] Land Use Committee will likely provide no more than a few thousand additional dwelling units. The committee decided to allow taller buildings along retail strips, but it declined to allow the relaxation of parking requirements that would make redevelopment feasible..." (Gilbert 1993, 7).

The different streetscapes encountered in Metro's suburbs creates a slightly different set of problems for arterial intensification than encountered by City of Toronto planners in their attempt to build support for main street redevelopment. While both types of intensification must address challenges presented by municipal regulations and buildings codes, as well as resistance from adjacent residents, those who favour intensification along suburban arterials have encountered difficulties in finding property owners willing to participate. Unlike in the City of Toronto, where planners are dealing with small-scale owners of individual lots, parcels tend to be larger scale in the suburban areas. Developers in these areas appear to be reluctant to undertake mixed-use projects: they generally specialize in either residential or commercial projects and find the cross-over difficult. Financial institutions may also be less likely to provide capital for mixed-use projects because of the lack of track record and the competition retail space on main streets would face from large scale "big box" retail on the suburban fringe or from regional shopping centres. The other distinguishing feature of suburban arterials is the prevalence of strip malls with multiple owners. Planners report that it has proved very difficult to achieve a group effort to redevelop such malls. Building support for arterial intensification in suburban areas will therefore require close cooperation with property owners, and a variety of confidence building measures among developers.

Sub-centre development has also been dogged by opposition from adjacent residents. The most successful sub-centre development in the GTA is in North York. Nonetheless, because it was fashioned out of an existing stable residential area, it has run into on-going political opposition to its growth and expansion. Neighbourhood groups have consistently objected to new development proposals in the area on the grounds that the adjacent existing neighbourhoods were not designed to deal with the increase in traffic overflow from high-density, mixed-use development.

3.7.7.1.2 Industrial Land Redevelopment

Redevelopment of industrial land has had the greatest potential for achieving intensification targets for Metro, especially in the City of Toronto. However, the redevelopment of industrial sites has been far from uncontroversial. Industrial redevelopment projects have tended to involve high-rise apartment buildings and in many cases, sites have been adjacent to established residential areas.

Conflicts over industrial land redevelopment can be summarized as follows: developers propose them because of the positive locational attributes; community groups oppose such projects on the grounds that they will negatively affect their quality of life; the school board

points to the lack of educational facilities;[15] labour groups oppose them because of the loss of industrial land; councillors representing wards where redevelopment proposals are coming forward oppose such projects, but municipal councils as a whole, and their staff, tend to support them because of their positive fiscal and economic implications.

From the developer's point of view, positive locational attributes include the fact that the land is already assembled and serviced, is near cultural amenities and community facilities, and is well serviced by transportation links. The high densities that are usually permitted or contemplated on such lands help make the project more financially attractive to developers and financiers.

Community groups and area residents object to industrial land redevelopment on quality-of-life grounds. Their arguments fall into three main subcategories: concern about social changes wrought by the development (fear of increased crime and other, often unnamed, "social problems"), the perception that the proposed development simply does not fit in terms of size and density with the existing built form adjacent to it, and negative impacts on local services and amenities (e.g., traffic, parking, views, and parkland). Another fear, often hidden, is the residents' belief that redevelopment projects will concentrate assisted housing in their area.

3.7.7.1.3 Social Housing

Intensification programs in Metro—whether arterial, sub-centre or industrial land redevelopment—have been faced with a serious obstacle: the link in the public mind between high-density housing and social housing. During the steep decline in market building activity during the early 1990s, assisted housing became the "only game in town" in the medium- and higher-density categories. In the City of Toronto for instance, assisted housing went from 25 percent of multi-residence units in 1989 to 93 percent in 1993.

In areas with already high levels of social housing, groups opposed further concentrations in their neighbourhoods, while in areas relatively free of social housing, groups expressed the apprehension that even one project could bring with it further social housing in a domino effect. Thus, any social housing in Metro was likely to receive a rough ride from resident associations, whereas mid-rise projects, such as stacked townhouses and condominiums, were not likely to be opposed, and even high-rise condominiums often escaped opposition.

A series of policy developments at both the municipal and provincial levels may help obviate this barrier to intensification. First, many municipalities in the Toronto region have announced "fair share" policies that are intended to regulate the amount of social housing they accept and to prevent concentrations of social housing in particular areas of the municipality. For instance, while Scarborough accepts the overall 25 percent affordability requirement of the province, its official plan prohibits social housing projects if their effect will be to increase the

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[15] The Toronto Board of Education filed an objection to virtually every major housing development in Metro between 1990 and 1993 (*Globe and Mail* March 27 1993: A17).

amount of rent-geared-to-income units in the neighbourhood to more than 8 percent of the expected population.

These policies may have been superseded by more recent initiatives at the provincial level. The new Tory government announced soon after its election in the summer of 1995 that it was canceling provincial contributions toward new assisted housing projects and would move toward a policy of rent supplements for low-income households. This, together with the government's plan to abolish or significantly weaken rent controls, led many observers to believe that a low-income rental market will return to the region. If this is the outcome, the stigma attached to intensification as a back door for social housing will be removed.

3.7.7.1.4 Basement Apartments

Despite polls showing that the majority of citizens support the right of home owners to create independent dwelling units, basement apartments have faced fierce political opposition in Metro's suburban communities. When the NDP introduced its basement apartments legislation in 1992, many municipalities objected. But by removing local discretion over the issue, the province had effectively shifted the debate out of local communities and into the inter-governmental sphere. The new Conservative government, in repealing the Residents' Rights Act in 1996, restored municipal discretion over basement apartments. This may lead to a rekindling of the debate in Metro's area municipalities. However, market conditions (i.e., lower housing prices and lower interest rates) may have changed sufficiently so that home owners no longer have as much need for a "mortgage helper". Until changes in the housing market once again bring the issue of basement units to the fore, the debate about them will probably be muted.

3.7.7.2 Suburban Municipalities

Many of the types of intensification policies discussed above with respect to Metro Toronto are also in place in the suburban municipalities outside Metro, where they encounter similar responses. Although Metro has received the lion's share of social housing in the region, concentrations have also developed outside Metro, such as in Mississauga. There, half the multiple-residence development applications in 1990 were for non-profit or subsidized housing. Public resistance to social housing is also strong in these municipalities and has undermined intensification efforts.

As in Metro, arterial intensification and sub-centres are also favoured by suburban planners outside Metro as a way of accommodating changing housing needs without disrupting existing neighbourhoods. Residential districts adjacent to intensification areas often resist change. In Brampton, for instance, public consultations on their Central Commercial Corridor Plan generated controversies in areas where it passed through lower-density neighbourhoods.

Basement apartments are also very controversial in suburban areas outside Metro. The suburban mayors of the GTA have unanimously and consistently objected to the province's Residents Rights Act and, like Scarborough within Metro, have balked at endorsing as-of-right basement apartments in their official plans. Although there are fewer opportunities for

the residential redevelopment of industrial land in the suburbs outside Metro, when opportunities arise, they are often met with fierce public resistance.

Official plans and zoning policies are invariably directed toward protecting the integrity and stability of established neighbourhoods. Onerous conditions are placed on intensification projects; conditions that greatly exceed the criteria laid down by the provincial planning framework. Official plans also typically contain provisions designed to avoid threatening existing residents with unacceptable changes in their built environment. Pickering's plan, for instance, states that: "Town Council recognizes its neighbourhoods as the fundamental building block of the urban system; and will endeavor to maintain the unique character and identities of its neighbourhoods as they evolve over time" (Pickering 1995, 19).

If anything, public resistance and political sensitivity to intensification policies is higher in suburban areas outside Metro than in Metro itself. This can be largely attributed to the widespread consensus among suburban decision-makers and residents that suburban living offers something different than that available within Metro. People have migrated to suburban regions for low-density housing, planners claimed, and it would not be right to prohibit such housing forms for planning or political reasons even if it were technically and financially feasible to do so. "There's always Metro Toronto for those who prefer higher densities" is a sentiment that resonates widely in suburban municipalities outside Metro.

While this comparison with Metro might help the reader appreciate the challenges to building support for intensification in suburban areas, it leaves out an important aspect of the subject that is unique to the newly developing areas outside Metro, namely, greenfield development. Provincial policies have required that such development incorporate affordable housing, and a range of densities and housing types. These policies are being partially implemented, aided by market forces that favour first-time homebuyers; but other dynamics are frustrating greenfield development at higher densities. Along with engineering and planning departments, local residents are also reluctant to consider more compact standards of development. For instance, a subdivision plan may call for a mix of densities, but the lower-density components may be the first to be constructed. New residents arriving in the subdivision then organize to have areas rezoned in order to prevent the medium- and higher-density housing from ever being built. Furthermore, residents of existing homogenous, low-density subdivisions resist plans to allow mixed-density development in new subdivisions adjacent to them, citing concerns over property values and amenities.

In fact, planners and developers in the Toronto area identify consumer preference for low-density large-lot housing as one of the most important constraints on intensification. For example, a survey conducted for the Home Builders Association indicated that 75 percent of first time buyers preferred single-detached and 13 percent wanted semi-detached housing (Mary McDonough Research Associates 1994). Another study conducted for the OGTA found that new immigrants—who are increasingly heading directly to the suburbs rather than the region core—were "particularly adamant that owning their own home with some land was an integral part of their vision of living in Canada.... These respondents were also extremely critical of proposed multiple dwelling units designed to accommodate people of different income levels" (Infoma Inc. 1992, 25).

This lack of popular support for intensification policies is echoed among the farm community. Generally speaking, farmers and rural dwellers in the GTA have perceived attempts to restrict greenfield development with suspicion. The Ontario Federation of Agriculture (OFA), for instance, has expressed its concern that intensification policies may preserve agricultural land without preserving the agricultural industry. Some OFA chapters, like Waterloo, have a strong anti-severance stance, but there are no such chapters in the GTA. The OFA's policy is that residential development in rural areas should be allowed.

Rapid growth in the regions around Metro Toronto, and chronic underfunding have resulted in overcrowded schools. School Boards in these areas have responded with a number of initiatives that may discourage settlements at higher densities. For instance, the Dufferin-Peel Roman Catholic Separate School Board adopted its "Residential Development Evaluation Policy Statement" in 1994. The Statement advises Peel Regional Council to refuse development applications if more than 30 percent of the pupils in the education service area are housed in portables, or if local schools are already at significant overcapacity.

While environmentalists generally support growth management and intensification on a regional level, suburban developments are often opposed by local conservation groups as being too dense for the local carrying capacity. This has been especially true for developments in sensitive areas such as on the fringes of the Oak Ridges Moraine. In Aurora, for instance, conservation groups have claimed that higher-density development makes it more difficult to preserve landscape features. They have appealed developments to the OMB and on occasion have received decisions in favour of lower-density development.

These dynamics have presented real barriers to provincial intensification objectives. However, some municipalities where planners have strongly supported intensification goals have undertaken extensive consultation exercises to increase public acceptance. Perhaps the best example of such a process took place in the City of Burlington, where the public was invited to help shape intensification policies following a number of educational events that assuaged fears of intensification projects (Pianosi 1991).

3.8 Concluding Comments

3.8.1 Provincial Coordination

The lack of coordination among provincial departments was blamed in part for the failure of the Toronto-Centred Region concept in the 1970s. A review of the policy and spending activities of a variety of provincial institutions reveals that this remains a serious problem in realizing any regional land use vision for the GTA.[16] In 1991, Richardson et al. wrote:

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[16] In fact, this is an issue often raised by municipal planners: "if the province can't get its act together to support growth management and intensification efforts, why should we?" they ask.

> [U]rban growth is a demographic, social, economic and technological, as well as a physical, phenomenon, in important ways influenced by and impinging upon the policies and programs of, at least, the ministries of Municipal Affairs, Housing, Transportation, the Environment and Agriculture. But there is not a vestige of systematic research, agreed goals, coordinated policies, or unified strategy for urbanization in Ontario, nor (with the very limited exception on the OGTA) any mechanism for developing them (5).

Five years later, there was little reason to change this assessment of the situation.

3.8.2 Metropolitan Planning

The OGTA was created by the Liberal government in 1988 as a means of addressing the need for coordinating provincial activity and infrastructure investment in the region and for managing growth. The office has played an important role in developing a regional vision and enunciating the principles of a more compact urban form. It has gradually built support for region-wide solutions to region-wide problems. It has also been important to the learning process that has resulted in higher acceptance of the need to manage growth by working behind the scenes with regional and municipal governments.

After eight years of existence, however, it is clear that the OGTA cannot substitute for a full-fledged regional planning agency. It plays only a minor role in coordinating the land use plans of the region (it provides comments to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs), has little public profile, and has lost its deputy minister. Furthermore, the regional planning activities of the OGTA appear to be at a standstill. After 1992, when the "emerging consensus" was achieved on an urban structure concept based on a series of regionally-significant nodes and corridors, the regional planning process was supposed to continue with the formulation of a Strategic Action Plan, including a growth management policy statement for the GTA under Section 3 of the Planning Act. The policy statement was drafted, but was not included in the comprehensive set of policy statements generated as part of the reforms to the Ontario planning system in the spring of 1995. Staff at the OGTA could not say when or if the policy statement would ever be revived. With regional planning being downplayed, the office is giving more attention to issues related to economic development and regional competitiveness in the global economy.

3.8.2.1 Lack of Public Support and Awareness

In the absence of a legislative mandate with clear authority over strategic land use and infrastructure decision making in the region, the OGTA relies for its effectiveness on the willingness of its municipal partners to cooperate with it. The OGTA's role as a metropolitan-wide consensus-builder on planning issues would be strengthened by widespread recognition of the GTA as a regional entity and the links between land use, infrastructure and development issues. The available evidence indicates, however, that awareness of the need for regional planning is not high in the GTA.

A study conducted by Informa Inc. (1992) involved a series of focus groups with various categories of home owners in the GTA. The study arrived at a number of interesting conclusions:

- there is no apparent awareness of the designation, Greater Toronto Area, or what it represents
- the primary focus among the general public was on the home and immediate neighbourhood, with much lower interest and awareness of GTA-wide planning related issues and problems
- the Canadian identity is tied in with the principle of owning a detached home, and the belief that Canada is a vast country with an abundant stock of land for development.

Furthermore, there is little evidence that the need to address sprawl is recognized by the wider community. A series of focus groups conducted by Decima as part of a study for the OGTA found that members of the general public either had no concept of sprawl, didn't think it was a problem, or believed it was inevitable, and therefore did not think of intensification as an effective response (Lehman and Associates 1995).

As the only planning and coordinating institution on a GTA-wide basis, the OGTA is the obvious candidate for building a regional awareness of these issues. In its eight year existence, however, it has conducted few public consultation events. Reinforcing the perception that growth management and intensification are "professional class" issues in the GTA, the office restricts its consultation efforts to planning and political officials from regional and municipal governments in the GTA, such as the series of regional workshops held in 1992 to communicate its vision for the region.

3.8.2.2 Competition Among Municipalities

Another factor that has undermined the role of the OGTA and the cause of planning on a metropolitan level is the competition between municipalities within the region to attract provincial investment in infrastructure, population, and employment growth. Given the historic under-investment in infrastructure in the metropolitan region since the mid-1970s and a worrisome fiscal climate, needs are great and means are small. The result has been chronic contention over what the most important and urgent investments for the whole region are. Rural municipalities want highway and major road extensions, suburban municipalities want trunk sewer and water extensions, and Metro wants transit improvements. We have seen that the same conflict occurs over issues related to population and employment growth, with Metro demanding more than its share and meeting suburban resistance.

These conflicts have reduced the role of the OGTA as a facilitator of metropolitan consensus and shifted it to one of provincial broker. Thus, the province short-circuited the discussion on population allocation for the region and stepped in to declare that "Scenario One" (favouring Metro) would be the target it used in provincial planning and investment decisions. Similarly,

the OGTA is brokering a solution to difficult negotiations between York and Durham region over the completion of the intermunicipal sewer system on the east side of the GTA.

3.8.3 Provincial Influence on Municipal Planning

In the absence of an effective metropolitan planning agency, the province has preserved an important role in planning the region through the plan approval power of the Ministry of Municipal Affairs. There, a team of provincial planners has set growth management targets for the region, adopted the urban structure vision elaborated by the OGTA, and attempted to implement changes by shaping upper-tier official plans. The team is also responsible for seeing that provincial land use policies on housing intensification are respected in upper- and lower-tier plans.

It is clear that the province has made a concerted effort to use its approval powers over municipal planning to encourage growth management and intensification in the GTA. Municipal planning has undergone significant changes in response to the changing provincial policy environment: more attention is paid to managing growth in a fiscally and environmentally sound manner, municipalities give more consideration to the range and mix of housing in their planning decisions, and there are signs that a loose urban structure (based on nodes and corridors) is emerging through the official planning process.

However, we cannot conclude that provincial policies have had a decisive influence in growth management and intensification at the local level. We have seen that local plans only partially incorporate provincial objectives: they weakly reflect growth management objectives, only partially reflect the urban structure elements, and show a low level of compliance with housing intensification policies. The question arises: why do the provincially-approved official plans fail to reflect provincial objectives?

The analysis presented here clearly indicates that there are serious limitations on the ability of provincial policies to influence land use planning at the local level. A few of the factors that may help to explain the gap between provincial intentions and municipal performance are raised here.

The first factor is the reluctance of suburban upper-tier municipalities to serve provincial interests. With indirectly elected councils, upper-tier municipalities in suburban areas of the GTA have traditionally served as an expression of municipal autonomy: they have helped raise the capital needed to fund the infrastructure required by municipal development plans, but have provided little leadership in terms of the management of growth or the imposition of development targets in line with provincial objectives.

With greater provincial attention to growth management issues, and as the province has attempted to remove itself from the actual responsibility for carrying out growth management, the role of upper-tier municipalities has become more important. Essentially, the province has asked upper-tier municipalities to reverse their historic role as agents of the lower-tier municipalities to become agents of the province.

There is some evidence that upper-tier municipalities are taking a more proactive role in coordinating the growth plans of lower-tier municipalities. For instance, York and Peel regions undertook in the mid-1990s to produce official plans after more than twenty years without them. But the preponderance of the evidence suggests that upper-tier municipalities have rejected the growth management role being promoted by the province. For instance, it is clear that upper-tier municipalities have their own interest in promoting suburban expansion: i.e., either to exploit previous investments in infrastructure, or to attract more provincial funding for planned investments.

Although upper-tier municipalities have expressed an interest in achieving higher densities of new growth, largely because of the presumed efficiencies in infrastructure requirements, they do not appear to be prepared to force higher average densities on lower-tier municipalities. The Ontario Planning Act assigns legal primacy to the upper-tier government in planning matters and makes provision for upper-tier intervention in lower-tier planning. In practice, however, such intervention is rare:

> It can be done, but only at considerable political cost. Further, it is argued that in a dispute between the upper and lower tier, the lower-tier municipality will generally win in the long run, and particularly in the political sense, because the lower tier has the luxury of being specific, and somewhat closer to the electorate. Unless the upper tier can clearly demonstrate that the interest is regional, and have the lower tier generally agree with the assignment, the region is unlikely to prevail in the long run (Hollo 1989, 8).

Weak provincial policy instruments is a second factor that may help explain the difficulty of translating provincial intentions into municipal planning policies. For most of the period under study here, the most powerful instrument in the province's policy arsenal for growth management and intensification was the Land Use Planning for Housing Policy Statement, largely because it was formally adopted under Section 3 of the Planning Act. In 1987, Eli Comay, evaluating the various options for provincial intervention in local planning for housing intensification, had this to say about the prospect of a Housing Policy Statement:

> a formal policy statement would probably do little more than indicate what municipalities would have to "have regard to" in dealing with the question. As they are now applied, Policy Statements deal with subjects (flood plans, mineral aggregate supplies, foodlands) where the matters in question are tangible, and for which the degree of "regard" is presumably capable of being measured, at least in theory. Similarly statements regarding housing regulation would likely involve material of a more ephemeral nature, concerning which the degree of "regard" given would, in the end, be a matter of judgment rather than measurement. The mechanisms for securing actual compliance with such as statement are hard to envisage (Comay Planning Consultants Ltd. 1987, 12).

The research findings presented here confirm the perspicacity of this statement. In general, the Housing Policy Statement has allowed for a wide degree of interpretation and has been difficult to enforce on reluctant municipalities. It has also been inadequate in a number of more specific ways:

- Although it set targets for the provision of affordable housing, and these were consistently met in municipal plans, it was unclear about how this target was to be provided: municipal-wide or site-by-site. This provided area municipalities with a latitude of interpretation that weakened its impact.

- It did not set targets for intensification, i.e., it did not suggest minimum densities or require that a certain percentage of new housing units be created in already built-up areas.

- The policy statement did not contain any provisions to curtail greenfield development. In fact it required that municipalities ensure a 10-year supply of developable land by designating it as such in their official plans. This turned out to be the aspect of the statement that received the greatest degree of compliance from municipalities.

- Although it set deadlines for implementation by municipalities in the GTA, it did not have or imply any enforcement procedures.

Furthermore, because of its nature as a policy statement under Section 3 of the Planning Act, municipalities were not legally required to observe the Housing Policy Statement by the letter. Its incorporation into the comprehensive set of policy statements of the 1995 planning reform package gave it more authority under the new "be consistent with" provision, but this has been reversed by more recent changes to the planning system.

A third factor that should be discussed here is fiscal restraint. As Filion (forthcoming) has observed, fiscal restraint has had an ambivalent effect on intensification. On the one hand, one would expect reduced funds available for infrastructure to be favourable to intensification policies, because these minimize infrastructure requirements. This also tends to increase provincial motivation to control sprawl. On the other hand, fiscal restraint may reduce the province's influence in municipal land use planning. As Price (1995, 211) has remarked: "in the 1990s, as provinces have seen their financial powers lessen relative to those of their cities, provincial control over municipalities has begun to erode." The research conducted here corroborates that observation: the province has experienced a gradual loss of its "leverage" over municipal planning decisions due to a gradual decline in its financial transfers to municipalities. Most importantly, the province's ability to deliver on infrastructure promises has declined, and the threat of withholding major infrastructure investment in order to achieve municipal policy compliance has become an empty one.

3.8.4 Municipal Planning

To what extent are local municipalities reacting to upper-level policy signals and to what extent are they responding to local conditions? Our findings on municipal planning suggest that the answer to this question will vary according to geographic location within the region. At the lower-tier level, the City of Toronto is on one end of the spectrum in that it is responding largely to local conditions independently of provincial and OGTA stimuli. The city has established an ambitious growth target, which entails a high rate of housing development, and is committed to creating a wide array of intensification opportunities that meet and surpass provincial standards, as do its affordability targets.

Far from merely reacting to upper-level policy directives, Toronto has been actively lobbying for provincial growth management and intensification policies that would direct more growth to the regional core, and for changes in infrastructure investment priorities (transit over highways), environmental policies (such as more soil remediation standards that would allow brownfield intensification) and property taxation policies (such as unit assessment instead of market value assessment) that would strengthen the core area.

The city's position on intensification is complemented by Metro's intensification initiatives, including its campaign to increase population targets for the area municipalities within Metro, its recent official plan that focuses heavily on the need for intensification along arterials and in obsolete industrial areas, and its commitment to the Main Street Program. Metro has also served an important role in lobbying provincial agencies for increased infrastructure investment and population allocation. Its support for market (now "actual") value assessment suggests, however, that it has a number of interests that compete with its concern for the consolidation of the core city.

At the other end of the spectrum are the suburban areas outside Metro. In terms of consolidating and intensifying the already built-up areas, our findings suggest that these municipalities have "had regard for" provincial intensification policies in the sense that the language of intensification is now found in planning documents; but there are strong reasons to conclude that this language is designed less to embrace and implement provincial policy objectives, and more to satisfy provincial demands minimally while maintaining municipal options to control intensification and allow it only where appropriate.

"Appropriate" means where intensification would respond to local conditions such as the need to provide housing opportunities for an aging population near services, and to increase the financial viability of local transit, without disrupting existing neighbourhoods. Typically, this has translated into support for a nodes and corridors approach, which creates limited intensification opportunities along selected arterials and at locally- and regionally-significant sub-centres.

In terms of achieving higher-density growth on greenfield sites, it is clear that the days of free-wheeling scattered fringe development, subsidized by public treasuries and unacknowledged environmental costs, are over. Suburban municipalities have responded to the need to achieve a more fiscally and environmentally responsible form of expansion as their own population demand lower taxes, pay-as-you-go development charges that shift the costs of new development onto newcomers, and the preservation of local environmental amenities such as open space, woodlots, wetlands, and valley corridors.

But, this does not mean that the suburbs as we have come to know them are no more. There is no indication in municipal planning policies that a radical change in the design of new development in suburban areas is in the wings. No lower-tier or upper-tier suburban official plan reviewed for this research committed the municipality to significantly higher densities than were conventionally the case. There has been a move toward higher-density development in some new subdivisions, with more townhouses and smaller detached lots; but there is no

evidence that this trend can be maintained by current planning policies when market conditions change to favour lower-density housing once again.

So far, we have discussed the City of Toronto and the lower-tier municipalities in the suburban regions outside Metro. Not surprisingly, the remaining municipalities—those mature suburbs adjacent to the City of Toronto within Metro—represent a blending of features found within these extremes. On the one hand, and similar to the situation in the City of Toronto, there is little undeveloped space left in these municipalities. Municipal officials are aware that growth can only occur through intensification and that declining household sizes mean that population levels (and the number of taxpayers) can only be maintained if housing densities go up. On the other hand, much of the suburban landscape within Metro is of the single-family type, engendering the same caution toward intensification as found in the new suburbs outside of Metro, and the desire to direct intensification opportunities to nodes and corridors. To these municipalities, intensification opportunities are limited and Metro's intensification objectives are unrealistic. The result has been continuing conflict between Metro's lower-tier suburban municipalities and Metro itself over a wide number of planning issues, including population and housing targets, and over the approval of intensification projects.

4. The Montreal Region

4.1 The Region and its Governance

For the purposes of this report, the Montreal region is defined as the 29 municipalities on the island of Montreal along with the 107 municipalities adjacent to the island and corresponding roughly to the Montreal Census Metropolitan Area.[1] In 1991, the region had a population of 3,232,973, and a total land area of 5,000 square kilometers (see Figure 4-1).

At the centre of the region is the Montreal Urban Community (MUC), located on an island between the St. Lawrence and Des Prairies rivers. The MUC is linked by bridges to the suburban communities of the South Shore and to the island of Laval to the north. Laval in turn, is linked by bridges to the suburban communities on the North Shore. The MUC oversees the police, transportation and parks systems and does regional planning. However, the most effective land use planning powers reside mostly with the lower-tier municipal governments.

Suburban growth in the Montreal region has far outstripped the boundaries of the MUC and spilled into the surrounding suburban municipalities. The large number of municipalities in the off-island suburbs, many of them tiny by the standards of other provinces, has not lent itself to effective growth management.[2] The introduction of upper-tier municipal jurisdictions (municipalités regionales de comté or MRCs) on the North and South Shores was meant to help coordinate services at a wider level and stimulate more effective regional land use planning. As planning authorities, however, these are relatively weak compared to regional planning bodies such as the upper-tier municipalities in Ontario.

The metropolitan region as a unit has no governing municipal institution. The provincial government's intervention in the region is segregated into five administrative regions, three of which include large areas outside the Montreal region. Thus, there are five regional development councils with mandates to prepare regional economic development plans, five regional health and social service boards, and so on.

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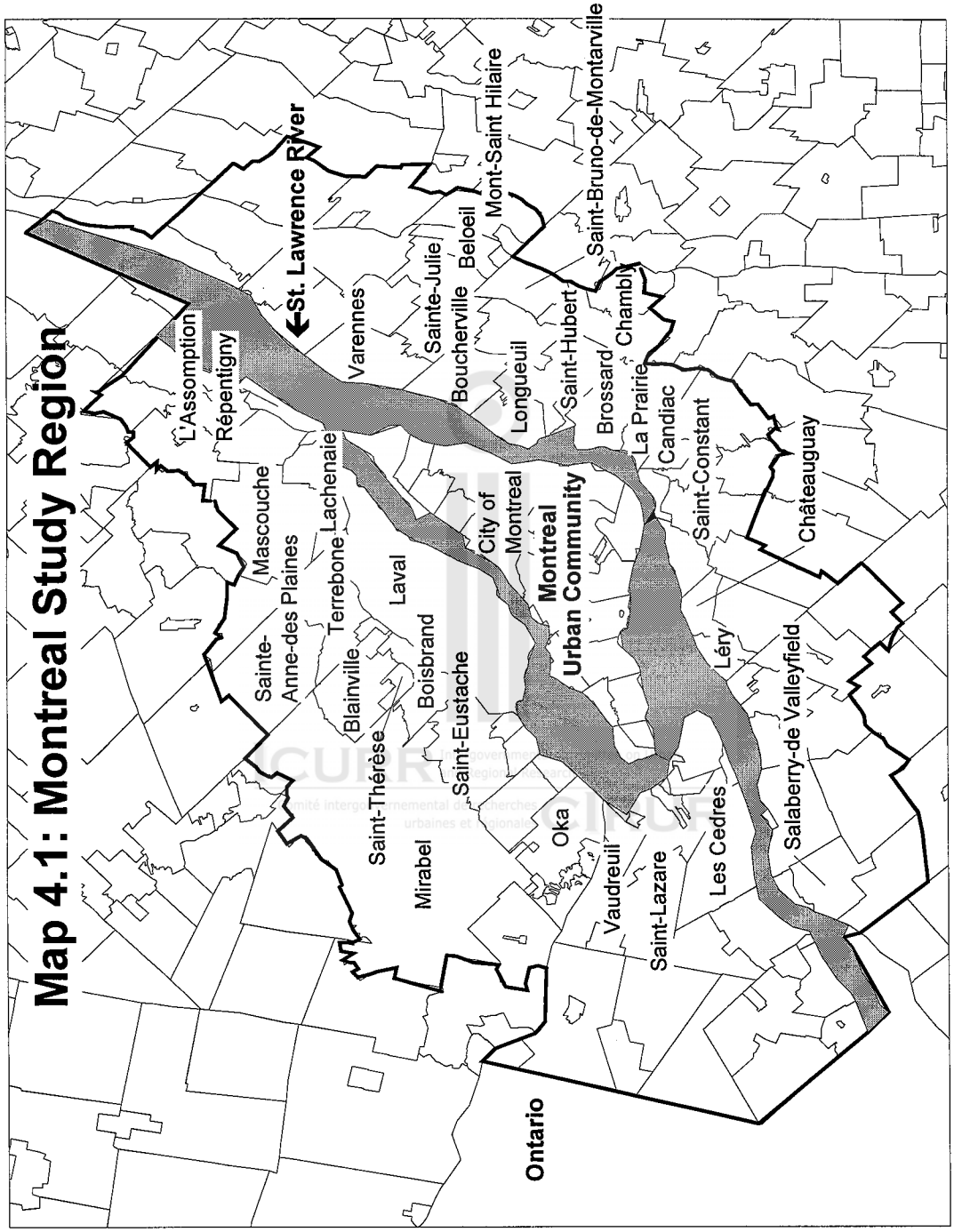
[1] This is the definition of the study region used by the Task Force on Greater Montreal, discussed later in this chapter.

[2] Of the 114 municipalities in the off-island suburbs, 11 have less than 1,000 inhabitants, and 61 have between 1,000 and 10,000 inhabitants.

Figure 4-1: The Montreal Region



4.2 Growth Patterns

Table 4-1: Population Distribution of the Montreal Region, 1971-1991

Territory	1971		1991	
	(000s)	Percent	(000s)	Percent
City of Montreal	1,254.0	44.1	1,017.7	31.5
MUC	1,959.1	68.9	1775.9	54.9
Laval	228.0	8.0	314.4	9.7
Northern Ring	171.3	6.0	376.6	11.6
Southern Ring	483.9	17.0	766.1	23.7
Montreal Region	2,842.4	100.0	3,233.0	100.0

Source: Statistics Canada

Population growth in the Montreal region has been slow compared to the two other study areas: between 1971 and 1991, growth was about 0.7 percent per year compared to 2.25 percent for Toronto and 2.4 percent for Vancouver. As shown in Table 4-1, however, there has been a dramatic shift of the population balance within the metropolitan area. In 1971, 44.1 percent of the regional population lived in the central city, but this had declined to 31.5 percent in 1991. The MUC has declined from more than two-thirds of the regional population to about 55 percent. In suburban areas, the opposite is true: on the South and North Shores, the population has grown from a combined 23 percent of the regional population to over 36 percent.

The figures reflect the immense migration that has taken place from the regional centre to suburban locations. Thus, the central areas of the region actually experienced a significant population loss in absolute numbers over the twenty year period: in both the City of Montreal and the MUC, absolute population numbers declined by roughly 200,000. In contrast, suburban municipalities on the South and North Shore experienced nearly a doubling of their populations. Sixteen municipalities on the urban fringe grew by more than 100,000 people between 1981 and 1991. Laval's share of the regional population has remained almost constant as migration into the area from the island of Montreal was balanced by out-migration to suburban communities further north.

Generally speaking, current development is strongest on the North Shore, in municipalities like Blainville, Bois Briand, Chambly, La plaine, Repentigny, St. Eustache. Populations on the island of Montreal and the mature suburbs on the South Shore are stagnant.

Between 1971 and 1991, population growth in the region was 14 percent, but urbanized land increased by 31 percent, suggesting settlement at diminishing densities. Nonetheless, as a

metropolitan entity, Montreal is compact relative to the other study areas. The average population density for the whole study area is 891 persons/square kilometre, compared with 697 for Toronto and 575 for Vancouver.

In many ways, the Montreal region is unique in its housing profile. Of the regional total of 1.3 million dwellings, the City of Montreal has about 460,000 units, a relatively large proportion compared to the other two study regions. Tenants make up 75 percent of households. This sets Montreal apart from other major North American cities, where home owners are usually in the majority. The city's housing stock contains a very low proportion of single-family houses, less than 8 percent of the total number of units. Also unusual is the dominant housing style, the "plex": a wood frame building of up to three storeys containing two to five units, each with a private entrance, and the building owner living on the ground floor.

Between 1989 and 1995, only 15 percent of housing starts in suburban areas off the island of Montreal were apartments, whereas over 60 percent of MUC housing starts were apartments. More than 90 percent of the single-family housing being created in the region were in the off-island suburbs. MUC starts account for only about a quarter of all starts in the region.

It is estimated that the region's 1991 population of 3.2 million people will grow to about 3.8 million inhabitants by the year 2023. This assumes a diminishing growth rate, from about 20,000 people per year in the 1971-1991 period to about 14,000 per year. It is likely that the demographic weight of the City of Montreal and the MUC will continue to decline, with over half the region's population residing off the island of Montreal by the turn of the century.

Other demographic changes are just as important. The population is aging: those over 65 made up 11.3 percent of the regional population in 1991 compared to only 6.9 percent in 1971. The aging of the population is especially evident in the MUC, where there are about 2.5 times more senior citizens than in the rest of the Montreal region.

About 15 percent of new immigrants to Canada come to the Montreal region. Almost 70 percent of these settle on the island of Montreal and more than 40 percent in the City of Montreal itself. In contrast, young francophone families have shown greater interest in suburban living. In particular, the francophone middle class has departed for suburban locations in large numbers. Between 1970 and 1985, the proportion of francophones residing in municipalities off the island of Montreal rose from 22 percent to 49 percent. The result of these two migrations trends will be a further concentration of visible minorities in the central area of the region, with a homogenous French middle class in the suburban areas.

Finally, the household structure is undergoing rapid changes. The traditional two-parent family with children is declining and there are growing proportions of singles and one-parent families, as well as aging empty-nesters. These trends are especially visible in the central part of the region.

4.3 Growth-Related Issues

The demographic trends have important implications: the decentralization of the population toward the off-island suburbs has outstripped effective administrative structures, leading to inefficient growth patterns; the central area of the region is in economic decline; many municipalities in the region are experiencing fiscal stress; and environmental impacts are high. The diversification of households implied by demographic trends are challenging municipal authorities to accommodate a wider range of housing types.

The issue of urban sprawl has become a significant political issue in the Montreal region in the 1990s. The Task Force on Greater Montreal, which was created in 1992 and made aggressive recommendations to curb sprawl, heightened the profile of the issue. The public attention given to sprawl continued into the middle-part of the decade. The topic emerged as a key issue in Montreal's municipal election in 1994, and was consistently raised during the provincial election campaign of 1994. In this section, some of the key public issues associated with sprawl are briefly reviewed.

4.3.1 Economic Issues

The key issue putting sprawl on the public agenda in the Montreal region is the link with the fate of the regional economy. It has become clear that it is impossible to have sustainable economic development without regional planning and without investments in infrastructure that support development. Of importance here are the overall rate of unemployment, the spatial distribution of total employment, and the shift in types of employment.

In the last 20 years, the regional economy has gradually deteriorated. Unemployment levels rose to over 12 percent in 1991, for the first time higher than the rate of unemployment in the rest of Quebec, and one of the highest unemployment rates in any major North American city. But not all of the region's municipalities are affected in the same way. In the period from 1981 to 1991, employment in the City of Montreal was stagnant, while its share of metropolitan employment declined from 55 percent to 50 percent. The remainder of the MUC underwent a slight decline in its share of metropolitan employment, from 29 percent to less than 28 percent, while the North and South Shores experienced very significant increases in their share of employment from about 16 percent to 22 percent of the metropolitan total (Coffey 1994). These figures suggest the migration of jobs to suburban locations, especially industrial and lower order service jobs. Left behind were a large number of unskilled labourers, some contaminated industrial sites, and unused infrastructure such as railyards and industrial buildings.

The other major issue is the lack of economic coherence of the region. The larger municipalities in the region have their own economic development offices that try to sell the municipality around the world. Municipalities of all sizes compete against each other for residential growth and non-residential investments, and the lack of an effective metropolitan administrative entity means that investment in infrastructure to support growth is often inefficient. The business community, and the municipalities themselves, appear to be deeply frustrated by this situation.

4.3.2 Fiscal Issues

Much of the concern over urban sprawl in the region has focused on the fiscal stress associated with an inequitable distribution of social costs. The migration of population from the central area of the region to ever more distant suburban locations has resulted in serious fiscal strains for those municipalities facing stagnation or population decline. This is an issue for older suburban areas on the island of Montreal, and is becoming a concern of the more mature municipalities off the island, like Longueuil and Laval. Most affected by these changes, however, is the City of Montreal itself.

Because the population of the City of Montreal is older and more heterogeneous than suburban populations, it requires more municipally-subsidized services. Land values and housing are more expensive in the central city, but residents are poorer. Unlike its suburban counterparts, the City of Montreal subsidizes housing costs for many of its residents, adding to its tax burden. The declining population of some parts of the central city means that fixed costs for maintaining and operating existing infrastructure must be borne by a smaller assessment base, while suburbanites who do not pay taxes in the city enjoy its amenities and employment opportunities.

The City of Montreal also has higher expenditure obligations due to its funding of regionally-significant recreational and cultural facilities, its higher policing and planning costs, higher social outlays, and greater infrastructure maintenance costs. Therefore, the tax rate in the central city tends to be higher than on similarly assessed properties in suburban locations. Although some of this tax burden has been shifted to the commercial sector, residential taxes remain above the regional average. This has contributed to the flight of mobile residents and businesses to lower-tax suburbs.

Taxation structure has become a progressively greater issue in the growth and development of the Montreal region since the Municipal Finance Act was introduced in 1979. The Act made municipalities the sole beneficiary of property taxes in the province. Up until that time, the school boards had also been funded through property taxes, but now they were to be funded directly by the province. Since then, provincial financial transfers to municipalities in Quebec have been gradually reduced.

In 1990, the "Ryan Reforms" associated with former Minister of Municipal Affairs Claude Ryan once again reduced provincial transfers by giving municipalities responsibility for funding transit, roads, and other services. In 1992, property taxes accounted for almost 80 percent of municipal revenue in the Montreal region. When other sources of local revenue are added, the figure is 99 percent. Thus, only 1 percent of all municipal operating revenue is derived from provincial transfers.

On the other hand, the provincial government continues to pay for, or subsidize, much infrastructure that is needed to support local development. Although municipalities are responsible for local and regional infrastructure, including water, sewer, roads, and recreation facilities, the province subsidizes some of the capital costs associated with them (e.g., 85 percent of sewage treatment facilities) and has full responsibility for highways, schools, busing for students, hospitals, and other major facilities.

There are several important implications of these trends. First, the gradual withdrawal of funding for many municipal services has tended to penalize central cities in Quebec because of the historically high level of provincial subsidies for services of a regional nature. Secondly, because of the dependence on property taxes as a source of revenue, municipalities in the Montreal region tend to compete with each other for new residents as a way of adding to their assessment base. Thirdly, in order to keep taxes low, there is a temptation for municipalities to underservice their residents and allow them to use services located in, and paid for by, other jurisdictions. Finally, municipalities make development decisions based on costs to themselves and do not systematically consider the implications of their decisions on the provincial treasury.

4.3.3 Transportation Issues

Transportation issues are also raised by growth patterns in the Montreal region. The metropolitan region has the highest level of transit ridership in the three metropolitan regions studied, and one of the highest in North America. However, a 1987 origin-destination study showed increasing use of the automobile with a decreasing share of trips being carried by public transit (Société de transport de la Communauté urbaine de Montréal 1987). Despite the increase in regional population and the investments in transit infrastructure, between 1974 and 1987 transit usage remained constant at about 800,000 trips per day while car trips rose from 1.2 million to 2.2 million. An update report in 1993 showed that ridership had declined in absolute numbers across the region since 1988, with alarming declines in the suburban communities off the island of Montreal. Causes for this decline in transit use are complex, but it is often attributed to suburban development that is difficult to serve by public transit, and a declining population base for the MUC transit system (IBI 1993). The lack of coordination between the many suburban transit agencies and the MUC Transit Commission can also be blamed for declining ridership. The massive public subsidies for car use, especially the major infrastructure developments paid for by the province are other reasons for the increase in car usage. Many people have criticized the government's decision in 1988 to remove toll booths from autoroutes leading into Montreal.

Falling ridership has made public transit more dependent on government subsidies. As the province has withdrawn from this field, transit spending has tended to exacerbate the fiscal stress experienced by municipalities. The increase in auto use has been associated with longer commute times, higher economic costs due to traffic congestion, and air pollution. Traffic conditions are particularly poor on and around the many bridges linking the island to the rest of the region.

4.3.4 Environmental Issues

A number of serious environmental issues are associated with development patterns in the region:

- less than half the regional population has sewage treatment facilities
- there is a very low availability of green space in the heavily urbanized areas
- about 85 percent of the region's wetlands have been lost due to human intervention

- 40 percent of the region's shorelines have been urbanized
- a large number of the small suburban municipalities are unable to afford municipal recycling programs, with the result that the regional diversion rate is only 10-15 percent of the solid waste stream
- the region suffers a higher rate of agricultural land loss than does the rest of Quebec
- the region is one of four zones in Canada where major interventions are needed to reduce the concentrations of ground-level ozone that are closely associated with automobile use.

As in the other metropolitan regions studied for this report, environmental issues are "in the air" in Montreal and are routinely included in background papers and government reports. But unlike the other regions studied, there have been few major environmentally-related task forces. There are a number of environmental groups in the area, some of which involve themselves in battles to prevent particular low-density development projects, but few have entered the regional debate on sprawl.[3] Thus, environmental issues have not reached the same level of public concern in Montreal as they have in Toronto and Vancouver.

4.3.5 Social Issues

Most of the issues already mentioned have significant social implications. Environmental problems reduce the quality of the living environment in the region and add to the personal stress of city life; traffic congestion increases the amount of time wasted in cars; decentralization of industrial employment has left some working class neighbourhoods in the central area with alarming rates of unemployment, poverty and social decay. Given the inequitable fiscal arrangements in the region, the lifestyles and travel behaviour of the mobile middle classes are being subsidized by the taxes of the less well-to-do in the central city.

Many of these issues have a high visibility in the Montreal region, especially those associated with the fiscal system. However, unlike in other metropolitan regions studied, housing choice and affordability are not major issues in the Montreal region. This is because housing in the region is relatively affordable, even in the central city, and vacancy rates in the rental stock are high.

4.3.6 Discussion

This survey of issues related to sprawl suggests that economic and fiscal issues are the most important in the Montreal region. Of paramount importance to the province is the coherence of the region as an economic unit, and the provincial role in funding and coordinating growth in the area. The City of Montreal, the MUC, and some of the older off-island municipalities

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[3] Exceptions to this rule are the municipal green parties, which have called for more compact development patterns in the region and Transport 2000 Quebec, which has promoted the idea of more transit-supportive development.

such as Laval and Longueuil, are concerned about growth at very low densities in suburban regions, the economic and demographic decline of the core, and the fiscal disparities and inequities between island and off-island municipalities. From the suburban perspective, the main issues are the withdrawal of government subsidies that support municipal services and new growth, and the lack of effective metropolitan planning for new infrastructure.

4.4 Provincial Planning Policies

The provincial government has undertaken legislative and policy steps to manage growth and reduce sprawl in the region.

4.4.1 The Protection of Agricultural Land Act

The plain around Montreal, especially to the south, is the most important agricultural area in Quebec. By the 1970s, however, serious problems had arisen in the farm economy of the region: farmers were avoiding long-term investments, much land was being taken out of production or converted to urban use, and production was only a fraction of its potential. Studies pointed to the leapfrog, low-density residential development in the suburban regions of Montreal, and the speculative activities of developers, as the primary culprits (Thibodeau, Gaudreau, and Bergeron 1986).

In response, the Ministry of Agriculture prepared and proposed Bill 90, The Protection of Agricultural Land Act (Loi sur la protection des terres agricoles). Despite strong municipal opposition, it became law in 1978. The purpose of the law was to ensure a permanent, strong agricultural base in Quebec. The principal instrument to be used toward this end was control over the creation of lots for non-farm development. The Act established an agricultural zone where it would be prohibited to subdivide or use a lot for non-agricultural purposes without authorization. Administration of the Act was vested in the Commission for the Protection of Agricultural Land. The commission began by identifying those municipalities whose agricultural lands would be protected. Maps showing the proposed agricultural zones were put forward by the commission, which invited municipal comments. Once the permanent boundaries were fixed, requests for inclusion or exclusion from the zone were considered by the relevant municipality and then forwarded with a recommendation to the commission, which made a final decision.

The commission receives about 4000 requests per year. About 80 percent of the requests come from private developers, and 80 percent of those are refused. About 20 percent of the requests come from municipalities during official plan reviews and official plan amendments, and about 80 percent of those are accepted. Thus, the Act has reduced development pressures by dampening land speculation. Although this undoubtedly strengthens municipal growth management capacity, the commission's decisions rarely contravene the growth aspirations of municipalities themselves. Unfortunately, no studies have been conducted to show the impact of the agricultural zoning law on residential densities.

The effectiveness of the Act may have been compromised by a number of changes since the mid-1980s. In 1985, the Liberal government amended the legislation to permit a revision of the boundaries of the agricultural zones in the province. Most municipalities submitted requests for dezoning of agricultural lands and these were routinely granted by the commission (Trépanier 1993). In the Montreal region, the revisions to the agricultural zone were completed in 1991: they resulted in the dezoning of 10 percent of the region's farmland. In Laval alone, 4000 hectares of land were dezoned. This was three times higher than the Quebec average (TFFGM 1993).

In 1989, the provincial government revised the Act to create a new body to appeal the decisions of the commission. The tribunal reviews about 30 percent of the requests refused by the commission and one-third of those decisions are overturned. Generally speaking, it is the larger developers who bring forward the appeals, which amplifies the impact of the Tribunal's decisions.

4.4.2 Housing Policies

The province of Quebec has tended to be relatively passive in the regulation of housing supply. For instance, it does not have a housing policy requiring municipalities to encourage the production of a diversity of housing types or to discourage homogenous, single-family development. Instead, the province has adopted two alternative strategies:

- it has implemented a series of funding programs for the production of social housing, housing renovation, and to encourage home ownership

- it has altered provincial legislation so as to allow municipalities authority to encourage certain forms of housing production.

The province's funding programs have had differential impacts on intensification opportunities. The social housing and rent supplement programs have been relatively neutral with respect to intensification. For example, the amount of social housing built on the island of Montreal has reflected the demographic weight of the island in the region. In contrast, the province's renovation programs have helped consolidate the urban tissue. Funding programs such as Loginove, begun in the early 1980s, have permitted the renovation of thousands of older housing units, mostly on the island of Montreal but also in the more mature suburban areas such as Longueuil and Laval. More recent programs, such as PRIL (Programme d'aide a la rénovation d'immeubles locatifs) are aimed at promoting the renovation of low-cost rental housing and boarding rooms, which will favour downtowns and older neighbourhoods. Two new programs—Revitalisation des vieux quartiers, and Rénove—will be funded jointly by provincial and municipal governments and the private sector, and are specifically directed to renovation of older housing stock. Through programs such as ReviCentre, the province has also funded infrastructure and other physical improvements in downtown commercial districts that enhance intensification potential.

Provincial funding for home ownership has tended to contribute to sprawl: Instead of subsidizing home ownership according to the difference between the price of housing and

available incomes (which would favour central city locations) these programs have generally made subsidies available up to certain price ceilings. This has meant that cheaper housing—mostly in suburban locations—would be more heavily subsidized. Furthermore, most programs are targeted at new housing, once again favouring suburban development.

The province has revised its legislation governing municipal powers on a number of occasions in order to increase municipal latitude in housing matters. In some cases, this has favoured the intensification of the central area of the region. For instance, the charter of the City of Montreal was revised in order to permit the municipality to subsidize residential development, and thereby attempt to reverse the depopulation of the area. Under this legislative provision, the city launched its successful program called "20,000 homes". The province allowed other municipalities to compensate property owners for tax increases that resulted from mature area revitalization schemes. The legislation was targetted at municipalities on the island of Montreal and would therefore have helped to increase housing affordability in the central area of the region. However, a loophole in the legislation allows suburban municipalities to use it to subsidize new construction. This has contributed to the competitive advantage of off-island municipalities in attracting home-seekers.

4.4.3 Environmental Policies

Up to 60 percent of vacant land on the island of Montreal is contaminated to some degree. Unlike in Ontario, where provincial standards on the remediation of contaminated sites is a major barrier to the redevelopment of former industrial sites, the Quebec government has helped stimulate development in older areas of the region by investing in soil remediation and remaining flexible on environmental health standards.

The province has signed a number of agreements with municipal governments in the region, especially the City of Montreal, in order to permit the decommissioning of industrial sites to allow residential development. The first of these was at the Angus Yard, an obsolete railway and industrial area where the province invested almost $30 million in site remediation. Since then, railway redevelopment has become one of the principle means of large-scale intensification in the central area of the region.

Quebec's 1988 Policy on the Remediation of Contaminated Lands is based on the principle that it is desirable from an environmental standpoint to recover former industrial lots that contain contaminated soil. According to the policy, this permits "the return of residents to the city centres and the creation of new living areas and parks in the heart of former industrial zones" (quoted in Church 1993, 13). Nonetheless, some municipalities have complained that standards are too high and that the associated decontamination costs effectively prevent the redevelopment of former industrial sites.

As in other provinces, the Quebec Ministry of the Environment has policies on flood plain protection, shoreline buffering, stormwater management, and woodlot preservation that require setting aside land from development. Inevitably this reduces the development densities in any given area, but these policies have not been identified as major obstacles to intensification.

4.4.4 Discussion

The evolution of Quebec's planning and policy framework demonstrates an intermittent provincial concern with the problems associated with urban sprawl. While a number of important advances have been made through these interventions—especially in terms of improvements to local planning and the curtailment of leapfrog development—the evidence suggests that government actions have not been entirely successful in realizing provincial objectives in controlling sprawl. In the next section, municipal policies that affect the density of residential development are considered.

4.5 Metropolitan Planning Policies

This section describes two major initiatives to improve planning on a regional scale: the creation of upper-tier governments, and the elaboration of a regional plan to guide provincial decision-making in the Montreal area.

4.5.1 Creation of the Montreal Urban Community

Until the end of the 1960s, annexation of suburban municipalities to the City of Montreal was the only form of growth management in place. In 1969, the Quebec government created the MUC, the first provincial attempt to get a larger than local perspective on regional problems. The MUC was given a mandate to take over extensive areas of municipal jurisdiction on the island of Montreal, including property tax assessment, regional planning, regulation of air pollution, traffic control, supply of drinking water, garbage disposal, sewage treatment, police and fire services, transit, libraries, public housing and regional parks. But because of disagreements between the City of Montreal and the suburban communities, only police, transit, and sewage were assumed by the regional council.

The MUC council consists of the entire membership of the City of Montreal council (now 59) along with the 27 mayors of the island suburbs. Voting power is proportional to municipal populations: each mayor casts as many votes as there are thousands of people in his or her municipality, while the Montreal councillors cast as many votes as there are thousands of people in the city divided by 59. Resolutions need to be approved by double majorities of city and suburban votes.

In 1973 the MUC issued the Proposals for Urban Development. This plan included an urban structure plan based on the notion of sub-centre development, one in the east end of the island and one in the west end. The purpose of the nodal development plan was to decentralize growth from the Montreal city centre, bring order to suburban development, and facilitate the creation of public transit networks (Sancton 1985, 129). Conflict between the central city and suburban municipalities prevented the plan from being formally adopted by the MUC, but market forces led to the partial realization of the suburban sub-centre concept.

4.5.2 Creation of MRCs

Until the end of the 1970s, there was no systematic legislation in Quebec governing land use planning. Municipalities controlled zoning, lot creation, and construction activities on an independent and voluntary basis. In 1979, soon after the Protection of Agricultural Land Act, the Land Use Planning and Development Act was passed. The purpose of the Act was to create a basis for local and regional planning as part of the government's drive to decentralize powers to the local level.

The Act provided for the creation of regional municipalities (municipalités regionales de comté or MRCs), all of which would have a minimum population size and maximum territorial size. Typically, a MRC council is comprised of the mayors of the component lower-tier municipalities, with a chairperson elected by the council members. The MRCs cover the entire province except the territory already included in the MUC, the Quebec Urban Community and the Outaouais Urban Community. The upper-tier MRC is responsible for strategic planning while the lower-tier municipalities are responsible for detailed planning. Unlike the MUC, the MRCs were not given responsibility for delivering regional services, such as water, sewage and transit.

According to the Act, the MRCs are obliged to create development plans for the region that give local municipalities direction on general land uses, urban limits and areas for urbanization, identification of land uses of regional interest because of ecological, heritage or cultural reasons, requirements for regional infrastructure, approximate densities permitted, and the location and type of major roads. During the preparation of the regional plan, the provincial government may give input about the land use and infrastructure aspects of the plan. Once the plan is adopted by the upper-tier government, it may be modified by the Minister of Municipal Affairs if it fails to reflect the policies and intended projects of the provincial government. Once the regional plan is finalized, local municipalities are required to pass official plans that corresponded to it within two years of its adoption. Provincial initiatives must also be consistent with the regional plan.

The creation of the MRCs, and the obligation to plan on a regional basis, have certainly increased communication among adjacent municipalities and facilitated greater collaboration among municipalities in providing services (Parent 1985). Their effectiveness as regional planning agencies, however, are in considerable doubt.

4.5.3 The Preferred Option

The 1960s saw a vast increase in the rate of suburbanization in the Montreal region, aided by an aggressive program of highway expansion[4] and housing programs that favoured home ownership in suburban areas. The first provincial initiative in management growth on a regional basis came with the creation of the Office de planification et de développement du

[4] 400 kilometres of expressway were built by the provincial Ministry of Roads between 1958 and 1976 within and around the island of Montreal.

Québec (OPDQ) in 1967. This agency had no implementing powers but was mandated to undertake studies on development trends and to identify potential problems.

By the late 1970s, the provincial government could no longer ignore the structural problems presented by patterns of growth in the Montreal region. Studies undertaken by the OPDQ indicated that the creation of the MUC in 1969 had not resolved regional issues, that the agricultural economy was under pressure in the region, that infrastructure costs needed to be brought under control, that the central area was experiencing a gradual loss of population, and that provincial action was required to better coordinate provincial policies and the planning activities of municipal governments (Office de planification et de développement du Québec 1977; Quebec Ministère des Affaires municipales 1977). The lack of a coherent framework within which to make major provincial investments had already caused the government to impose a moratorium on further subway construction in the region in 1977, and to withdraw commitments to fund major water and sewage treatment plants on the island of Montreal.

In this context, the Parti Québécois government introduced the "preferred development option for the region of Montreal" in 1978. This initiative was meant to address the key problems facing the region:

- the increasing consumption of land per household and leapfrog development on the fringe, with the associated waste of social resources
- the gradual depopulation of the metropolitan core where the remaining population grew older and poorer and financially less able to support major regional services.

The Preferred Option was based on three principles:

- consolidate the urban fabric within the present built-up area of the region
- give priority to redeveloping the island of Montreal
- pay special attention to improving the quality of life on the island of Montreal.

The Preferred Option was an attempt to guide the strategic decisions made by the government in the Montreal region to curb urban sprawl: decisions on the location of government facilities, infrastructure investments such as new subways and freeways, sewage treatment plants, greenbelts, and so on. This vision was to be realized by a moratorium on bridges and freeways connecting the central city to its suburbs, which served as the basis for the 1979 transportation plan for the region, and by preventing the urbanization of farmland in the outer reaches of the region, as expressed by the Agricultural Land Protection law. The Option was also meant to provide guidance to the newly formed MRCs in adopting their first strategic plans.

The plan was not well received by suburban municipalities, who resented the constraints it implied on growth. As a result, the Quebec government restated the goals by clarifying that it considered the near suburbs on the South and North Shores to be included in the areas designated for urban consolidation. Nonetheless, the lack of any concrete enforcement

mechanisms meant that the vision was not very effective either in coordinating provincial decisions, or in influencing the decisions of local governments in the area. For instance, the development plans of the suburban regional municipalities violated the regional vision in their growth projections and land designations. The plan soon came to be seen as a statement of good intentions by the government, but had limited impact on the form of growth in the area (Quesnel 1990).

After 1982, sprawl was somewhat contained by the recession and the oil crisis. In 1984, the province reinforced its commitment to the Preferred Option, but after 1987 sprawling tendencies resumed. This was partially due to improving economic circumstances for the region, but also resulted from policy changes: the Liberal government elected in 1985 lifted the moratorium on highway construction and invested in new highways in the outer suburbs, froze major public transport funding, and adopted policies that weakened the agricultural zoning law (Charbonneau, Hamel, Barcelo 1994).

4.6 Municipal Planning Policies

In this section, some of the planning initiatives undertaken at the local level to increase residential densities are surveyed. The policy context differs between municipalities on the island of Montreal (the MUC) and those in off-island areas. In off-island municipalities, planners report that the most effective growth management policy instrument has been the Protection of Agricultural Land Act, which has almost certainly served to constrain scattered, poorly planned development in rural areas, and the premature expansion of serviced suburban areas. This Act is less applicable to municipalities on the island of Montreal because of the dearth of agricultural zoning there. Policies of municipalities on the island also differ from those in off-island suburbs because of the availability of higher-order transit facilities which nucleate higher-density development. Finally, housing starts statistics for the Montreal region show dramatically different tendencies between the island and off-island municipalities: typically, only 15 percent of suburban starts are apartments whereas over 60 percent of MUC starts are apartments. Finally, patterns of housing tenure vary widely, with much higher rates of home ownership in off-island municipalities than on the island of Montreal. Thus, the discussion of local planning policies will be divided into two parts: municipalities in the MUC and off-island suburban municipalities.

4.6.1 The MUC Plan

In 1982, the provincial government required that a regional plan be produced by the MUC covering the items mandated for an MRC plan. MUC planners were faced with a number of serious challenges: population and employment had decentralized toward the extremities on the island, while the most valuable infrastructure remained largely in the central area: universities, hospitals, museums, cultural attractions. Several growth poles had emerged outside the central city, in Anjou, Pointe-Claire and Saint-Laurent, but they were not well served by public transit. The central city was declining in its share of population and employment, and the built environment was aging. New, weakly-structured, residential areas

were developing on the periphery of the island. Regionally-significant green spaces were disappearing.

The 1986 development plan, which came into effect in 1987, contained two general principles that reflected the objectives of the Preferred Option well : consolidation and structuring of the urban fabric in the suburban areas of the MUC, and revitalization of the central area of the MUC. In pursuit of the first objective, the plan contained a number of important policies:

- an urban limit line was established on the western side of the island to preserve remaining farmland
- intensification around transit stations was promoted
- consolidation of the residential fabric was encouraged
- medium and high-density housing was favoured, especially near existing and planned infrastructure.

The plan added a number of other measures to achieve the second objective:

- rehabilitate the existing housing stock
- promote housing for families
- promote rental housing
- maintain the residential function of the downtown and adjacent areas.

Although the plan contained a number of policies intended to promote intensification, an analysis shows that the urban structure was poorly defined. The three sub-centres identified—in Ville d'Anjou, Ville St. Laurent and Pointe-Claire—had already come into existence as a result of market forces, and few policies were elaborated to define their general character, permitted uses, or regional functions. Furthermore, the higher densities specified for the sub-centres and certain other areas of the island were not mandatory. The plan stated only that they "shall be taken into account in zoning bylaws of the municipalities." This lack of definition reflected the conflict and compromise between municipalities in the central area of the MUC and the suburban municipalities on the island (Trepanier 1993). Although the MUC has the power to demand changes to municipal plans in its jurisdiction, planners report that it is not very interventionist in this way. Nonetheless, the MUC official plan is seen by many municipal planners on the island of Montreal as effectively favouring more compact development, if only by raising the issue in an official document.

4.6.2 City of Montreal

The City of Montreal has a large number of programs to encourage housing production throughout the city, and has recently adopted planning policies to consolidate the city centre as a residential area. These programs and policies are at least partially motivated by the need

to reverse the population decline that has plagued the city, especially its downtown area, since the 1970s.

In the 1980s, the city embarked on "Operation 20,000 Units," a large-scale operation to interest residential builders in the supply of land available in the city's land bank. A total of 19,000 units was built under this program, representing nearly 40 percent of all housing starts in Montreal between 1980 and 1988, and substantially increasing the city's share of regional starts. In 1990, the City of Montreal revised its housing and land use policies with the aim of reducing housing costs and increasing the choice of housing available in the central city. As a result, a number of programs came into existence:

- The Homeownership and Assistance Program, which seeks to increase the city's ability to compete with suburbs for housing demand by encouraging home ownership.

- The Acquisition, Renovation and Sales Program, in which the city purchases an average of 1,200 units or rental housing units a year, renovates them, and sells them as housing co-ops.

- The Credit-proprio program, whereby new home buyers in the city are offered $2,000 in tax rebates and $10,000 in the downtown area over a three year period.

- The city-initiated Nouveau Montreal project, a strategy calling for the building of 10,000 new housing units in the downtown area.

A study undertaken by the city in 1992 suggested that there was enough vacant land to accommodate nearly 60,000 units, 10,000 of which could be located in the downtown area. The adoption in 1992 of a master plan for the district introduced a number of zoning changes to remove regulations that dictated lower-density ceilings for residential projects than for other land uses in the downtown. The new plan expressed the city's will to intensify the central part of the city to make use of existing infrastructure, and in order to maintain a lively street life and safe atmosphere. To avoid creating demands for expensive new services, the city is intentionally trying to attract non-standard households, i.e., couples without children, singles, and empty-nesters looking for an urban environment close to downtown's amenities. Because builders consider downtown development risky, the city has stepped in with financial and zoning incentives. Major public investments have been made in a strategy to revive the downtown area, including the rehabilitation of the Old Port area and Old Montreal.

The city has also taken steps to reduce regulatory barriers to intensification. The city co-sponsored (along with the provincial and federal governments) a design competition to generate ideas on affordable housing for the inner-city. Architects were invited to come up with designs for three sites within the city at the most efficient, buildable, and livable level. The contest helped to identify regulatory barriers to intensification, and these were addressed by the city's new master plan. Furthermore, after being the only municipality in Quebec not using the less stringent provincial building code, the city recently decided to adopt it. This will serve to reduce the cost of new development within the city, and put it on a par with suburban municipalities. In order to encourage mixed-use development, the city is also experimenting

with "performance standards" to replace the existing single-use zoning categories. This approach, pioneered in Vancouver, regulates development through standards for noise, shadowing, and height instead of restricting land use.

Montreal has shown flexibility in its zoning standards by permitting the creation of unusual ground-related housing forms outside the central area. Such forms include the innovative "grow home" designed by architects at McGill University. A grow home is a small two-storey home with a frontage as small as 14 feet and an unfinished interior that can be adapted to changing needs. The small size was primarily motivated by the desire to increase the affordability of housing and to respond to the housing needs of the increasing numbers of people living alone and in single-parent families. Several grow home projects have been built in the city, especially in the east end where greenfield development is still taking place. New units sold in a range between $76,000 and $85,000.

The conversion of industrial buildings has also been permitted by the city in certain areas, but this has not been a major source of intensification opportunities. The decentralization of industrial activity out of the city core led to the abandonment of many older industrial buildings in the 1950s and 1960s. In the mid-1980s, the city approved the conversion of some buildings along the Lachine Canal to residential use, but a strong citizen reaction to the gentrification process led to a moratorium on further conversion. There are not that many opportunities for industrial land redevelopment elsewhere in Montreal.

Another form of intensification that is being considered is the adaptive reuse of commercial buildings in the city's fur district. Because of the declining need for industry-related space, owners have approached the city about converting upper-floor space to residential use. The city is conducting a study on the issue and may make changes to the building code and zoning bylaws to permit this form of residential intensification.

An important part of the city's intensification strategy has been to enhance the quality of life within the city and thereby attract new residents and retain existing ones. Toward this end, the city has taken steps to reduce traffic speeds and volumes in residential neighbourhoods, to introduce parking regulations that favour city residents over suburban commuters.

Very few planning barriers to intensification remain in the City of Montreal. Building code requirements that prevent conversion of commercial or industrial buildings, a long and rule-governed approvals process, green space requirements, and parking requirements may play a role in reducing developer interest in housing construction within the city. Basement apartments are illegal in the city, but this has probably had little impact on housing densities because of the low proportion single-family homes. Most barriers to intensification have non-regulatory origins: the distaste of developers for working in downtown areas where land assembly is difficult and expensive, traffic congestion that makes development activities more difficult, financial institutions wary of the future economic health of the central city, residents in adjacent areas who are more likely to complain about new development activity, and relatively weak demand for housing.

4.6.3 Remaining MUC Municipalities

Because of higher taxation levels, higher housing prices, and the lack of greenfield land for new development, most island municipalities cannot compete with the off-island municipalities for single-family housing, any better than the City of Montreal. Nonetheless, many have adopted policies to attract new residents and to encourage appropriate housing forms.

Planners from island municipalities do not feel that they are being encouraged to do so by provincial policies. They do, however, report that MUC policies provide some minimal encouragement, especially with respect to the development of sub-centres.

A network of sub-centres is evolving on the island, based on office buildings, regional shopping centres, and high-density residential development. Sub-centre development has been aided through planning decisions and other government actions. They have been designated in the MUC plan—which imposed minimum density requirements in sub-centres—and in the local plans of Ville St. Laurent, Pointe Claire, and Ville d'Anjou. The MUCTC has coordinated transit provision to support the sub-centre concept: it uses the Pointe-Claire regional shopping centre as a major transfer point for bus services to the West Island and is planning a subway extension to the sub-centre in Ville d'Anjou.

Mixed-use development on main streets is a common form of intensification promoted in the island suburbs. This is being encouraged in a variety of ways, including zoning bylaws that favour the conversion of offices to residential uses above ground-floor retail, municipal programs to upgrade infrastructure and the streetscape to attract residents to the site, and by policies to permit development walk-up apartments of up to six storeys on main streets. Verdun, Pointe-Claire and Pierrefonds serve as good examples of this type of intensification. There, municipal policies have been adopted that allow for such development as a means of exploiting existing investments in infrastructure and public transit, building a clientele for main street retailers, and increasing public security in suburban commercial districts.

Several large scale intensification opportunities have arisen in more mature parts of the island as a result of economic changes. For instance, major redevelopment projects were being planned for several railyard sites—one in Outremont and another in Westmount—as the need for railway facilities declines and Canadian Pacific tries to raise revenue by selling its properties for development. In Ville St. Laurent, two very large residential developments are being proposed on the Canadair airplane assembly and airport site after the company transferred its facilities to Mirabel and Dorval airports.

Other types of intensification are occurring in the island suburbs:

- Mature municipalities that have seen a population decline and a reduction of family size have responded by allowing the conversion of schools to residential use. In Verdun, for example, four out of 18 have been converted

- Municipalities that host subway lines, are permitting intensification to occur adjacent to subway stations

- The production of high-density housing for seniors is encouraged as a way of freeing up lower-density units for families
- Municipalities have set planning goals for the mix of housing types in some new developments, such as those on Nun's Island in Verdun
- Municipalities have sold land on the condition that it be used for higher-density housing
- Renovation of the older housing stock in mature municipalities is a way of preserving housing and enhancing the attractiveness of island locations to new residents.

A number of planning policies that militate against increasing densities on the island: zoning regulation in some areas requires that large amounts of green space be set aside, which prevents intensification of the urban fabric. Parking requirements are also onerous, given the higher land values: it is not uncommon for municipalities to require two parking spaces per housing unit. Many municipalities on the island do not allow secondary apartments and there is no attempt in any municipality to substantially increase densities in established neighbourhoods. Finally, some of the mature municipalities are adopting policies to encourage conversion of their older housing stock to lower-density use in order to attract middle-class households that would otherwise go to off-island suburban locations. Lower-density ownership is seen as better than higher-density rental because it may lead to an increase in assessment and enhance private investment in maintenance and renovation of the housing stock.

4.6.4 The MRC Plans

The 12 MRCs outside the MUC were created in 1979, and the adoption of a regional plan was made obligatory. All MRCs in the Montreal region have adopted official plans. These plans usually contain policies that would favour intensification. These include:

- establishing urban boundaries
- completing the urban fabric within the urban boundaries before allowing new development outside the boundaries (Salaberry).
- maximizing the use of existing and planned infrastructure
- favouring the concentration of residential development in certain areas.

However, most suburban planners report that the MRC plans have had only moderate or little influence on actual development patterns, which are more directly controlled by municipal zoning. The plans currently in force are first-generation plans that contain some "motherhood" principles in favour of consolidating the urban fabric and preventing sprawl, but few policy instruments to ensure action on these matters.

The failure of the MRCs to act as effective regional planning agencies can be partially attributed to their institutional mandate and structure. MRCs have no responsibility for providing infrastructure, such as roads and sewage, and therefore have little leverage with local municipalities. Furthermore, MRCs are governed by councils that are indirectly elected (half based on one municipality/one vote and half based on demographic weight of constituent municipalities), and in many cases involve elaborate systems of municipal veto over regional decisions (Quesnel 1990).

Given these institutional characteristics, it is not surprising that the MRCs have failed to become a political forum of action independent from the local municipalities. Strong provincial guidance might have counteracted this situation and allowed the MRC to play a more assertive role. It appears, however, that this was not forthcoming (Charbonneau, Hamel, Barcelo 1994). For instance, the boundaries within which consolidation of urban development was to take place were not defined by the province; thus, each MRC was free to define its own urbanized boundaries. This resulted in highly optimistic growth projections and far too much land zoned for urbanization. Secondly, the province had proposed that MRCs adopt policies on the density of new development, but these were considered to be optional rather than mandatory. The Ministry may have made recommendations about density, but generally would not refuse to endorse plans that ignored them. Thus, most plans do not contain such policies. Without such policies, the MRCs could not serve as effective instruments of growth management.

4.6.5 Off-Island Municipalities

Planners from off-island municipalities report that provincial policies do not promote or encourage intensification. A qualified exception is the Commission for the Protection of Agricultural Land. The agricultural protection law has prevented some leapfrog development, but it has not served to substantially increase housing densities by placing constraints on the amount of land available for development. Planners report that it is fairly easy to dezone land from the protected areas, and that the amount of rural land available for development far exceeds foreseeable development needs.

Even in the absence of provincial encouragement, some off-island municipalities are adopting planning policies that would encourage intensification. In particular, the older suburbs adjacent to the island of Montreal are showing clear signs of interest in promoting intensification. In the mature downtown areas of cities such as Longueuil and Laval, the problems are similar to those found in the City of Montreal; services (schools, parks, libraries) have been created to serve an expected population growth, but population levels have more or less stabilized as suburbanization continues farther afield. These municipalities have adopted planning polices to allow the redevelopment of obsolete lands and to attract new households by emphasizing the quality of life.

Most other suburban municipalities adjacent to the island have moderately high densities and are growing at rates that are slow compared to the outlying suburbs. Some of the older suburban municipalities have identified residential areas where gradual density increases will be permitted, provided it is compatible with the surrounding built environment and the

available infrastructure (Brossard). Where new development takes place, some such municipalities have made provision for higher-density housing along arterials and near public parks (Brossard), have reduced the minimum lot size for townhouses (Ste.-Marthe Sur-Lac, Bois-des-Filion) and have changed zoning regulations to allow for zero lot lines (Saint-Hubert). Some (Charlemagne, Saint-Hubert) have legalized basement apartments in single-family homes. In a few cases, minimum-density zoning has been put in place for certain lands (Boucherville). Market conditions are seen as favouring a trend toward higher-density housing in these areas, especially smaller lots and townhouse development (Valleyfield). Higher-density social housing for seniors is welcome in many of these older communities.

In the outlying suburbs, where development activity is strong and densities are low, interest in intensification is much less and very few municipalities have explicit policies favouring redevelopment or intensification. Nonetheless, some such municipalities are permitting residences above stores on main streets (e.g., Saint-Anne-des-Plaines), or townhouses on smaller lots (St. Sulpice). Clearly, however, the emphasis in these municipalities is on the development of low-density housing.

In rural areas, development is at extremely low densities because of environmental regulations requiring large lots for septic tanks, especially near rivers and lakes. Density restrictions are also imposed by the agricultural zoning law.

4.6.6 Discussion

From the preceding review, we can conclude that intensification policies vary according to the geographical area. In the City of Montreal, great efforts have been made to reverse tendencies toward depopulation by improving the quality of life in the city and generating financial incentives and physical opportunities for intensification. Island suburbs are less proactive but show some commitment to consolidating the urban fabric, either by permitting major redevelopment of obsolete sites, main streets infill, or transit station intensification. There is some coordination between the MUC and suburban municipalities where sub-centres have been designated.

Off the island of Montreal, intensification is permitted as an adjustment to market conditions. Some municipalities have positioned themselves to attract first-time buyers, and have permitted smaller-lot singles and more townhouses than is customary. Those municipalities with older areas in decline are permitting them to be redeveloped, sometimes at higher densities, in order to sustain population levels and exploit pre-existing investments in public infrastructure. These policies may be associated with other strategies to prevent residents from migrating to the outer suburbs, such as resolutions to keep taxes low and services good. Few suburban municipalities are zoning for high-rise development, as the market for both condos and rentals is considered to be oversupplied. In the outlying suburbs almost no intensification policies can be detected and the vast majority of development occurs as low-density detached housing.

From this review, it appears that provincial growth management policies are poorly expressed at the local level: other than the Commission for the Protection of Agricultural Land, which

has had a moderate impact, municipal planners could not identify any provincial agencies or policies that were strongly in favour of intensification.

Nonetheless, there are a wide variety of local policy concerns that promote intensification policies, i.e., the repopulation of older areas, the need to respond to changes in the housing market by providing a wider range of housing types, and the pressure to use infrastructure more efficiently as a way of reducing taxation.

The most powerful impetus behind local intensification policies appears to be changing market conditions. Planners interviewed for this study expected that these conditions would eventually change to favour low-density housing once again. This suggests that, under the current policy and planning regime in the Montreal region, we cannot expect sprawl to be substantially curtailed: as long as suburban municipalities are competing with low taxes, single-family housing, and good highways provided by the provincial government, it is unlikely that the outward migration can be substantially constrained, and the consumption of rural land by low-density housing developments halted.

4.7 Recent Initiatives and Current Challenges

The forgoing review and analysis of provincial and municipal planning suggests a number of barriers to controlling sprawl in the Montreal region:

- there is no effective planning on the metropolitan level
- the transmission of provincial policies to local municipalities is impaired
- agricultural land preservation is not as effective as it could be
- there is no strategic transportation plan in the region to prevent sprawl and encourage more intensified development focused on the island and City of Montreal
- low-density suburban development does not account for the true costs of that urban form
- tax competition and municipal fragmentation is contributing heavily to the dynamics of urban sprawl
- residential intensification is not widely seen as a necessary antidote to sprawl, something to be promoted by municipal planning policies.

In this section, we discuss these issues at greater length and identify current initiatives to address them, and the challenges that remain.

4.7.1 Planning on a Metropolitan Scale

The Montreal region has no overall planning body responsible for land use planning or infrastructure development. Neither the province nor the MRCs are capable of coordinating

metropolitan decision making under the current structure. In 1988, the province abolished the administrative region for Montreal and created five functional regions to cover the area, including one for the island of Montreal, one for Laval, and three others extended into Quebec territory far beyond the boundaries of the Montreal region. This arrangement has resulted in poor coordination of provincial intervention in the Montreal region, with the associated problems of overlap and entanglement of responsibilities. The pre-existing MRCs have little planning authority within their own jurisdictions and have played no role in metropolitan coordination.

By the early 1990s, growth in the outer suburbs, and declining economic and fiscal conditions in Montreal, brought the issue of governance and planning in the Montreal region to a head. In December 1991, the Quebec Cabinet's Standing Committee on the Development of Greater Montreal—composed of MLAs from the Montreal region—published a Strategic Plan for Sustainable Economic Recovery in order to promote better coordination of government action with respect to economic development in the region. Entitled "Change Today for Tomorrow," the document exposed the two critical issues facing the region: the absence of a regional vision and the decline of the regional core. The lack of metropolitan governing structures and the immense fragmentation of municipal structures meant that only the provincial government had the wherewithal to remedy the situation. Thus, the Minister of Municipal Affairs announced the creation of the Task Force on Greater Montreal in April 1992.

4.7.1.1 Task Force on Greater Montreal

The Task Force on Greater Montreal (or the Pichette task force, after its Chair, Claude Pichette) was created as an independent commission composed of 12 members appointed by the province and representing various social sectors. No municipal officials, elected or unelected, were appointed, although municipalities were extensively consulted during the course of the task force's deliberations, which lasted approximately two years. The task force's mandate was:

- to deal with the conditions under which municipal functions should be carried out in Greater Montreal in the coming years
- to propose a future vision for the City of Montreal and the Montreal region
- to recommend a course of action to promote coordinated and sustained development for Greater Montreal.

From the beginning, the main focus of the task force was regional economic development, but this was consistently linked to the issue of regional planning. The challenge, as the task force saw it, was to make recommendations for promoting a more efficient region in terms of land use, infrastructure development, and service delivery in order to stimulate and sustain economic development in the region. It is important to note, however, that the task force was not expected to deliver a regional plan with projected population distributions, or even to consider future development options or urban structure scenarios, as was done in the GTA

and Vancouver. The task force only proposed what and how a future planning *process* would look like.

A reorganization of governance in the region was the major recommendation of the task force. It proposed that local municipalities be retained (for the time being at least), that the MUC and the MRCs be abolished, and that a metropolitan "agency" (to be called the Montreal Metropolitan Region or MMR) be created to address inter-municipal issues. The MMR would have jurisdiction in regional planning, economic development, the environment, transportation, arts, and police. The territory of the MMR would correspond roughly to the CMA, and would change its boundaries as the CMA evolved.

The MMR would be administered by a 21-member Metropolitan Council made up exclusively of municipal councillors, with representation weighted to population and a president agreeable to both the City of Montreal and the suburban areas. The region's municipalities would be grouped into four Intermunicipal Service Agencies (ISAs) to coordinate the funding and provision of cross-border services. An ISA would have no jurisdiction other than that voluntarily ceded by its member municipalities.

The Task force's recommendations targeted urban sprawl: "The idea is not to prevent peripheral development, but rather to take measures that would promote the consolidation of existing residential areas, orderly urban development, optimal use of existing collective infrastructures and facilities." There were four suggested instruments for achieving this end:

- Metropolitan planning and development framework: to include a definition of the areas to be urbanized, target densities, the identification of an urban structure based on activity poles, the consolidation of older areas, reservation of environmentally valuable areas, rural areas, major infrastructure and public facilities. Municipal plans would need to match the metropolitan plan, and a development project would have to include statements explaining how it is consistent with the metropolitan plan. Activities of the various federal and provincial departments impacting on the development of the Montreal region would need to be in harmony with the metropolitan plan.

- Housing policy: the report merely states that the Ministry of Municipal Affairs should adopt a housing policy to promote a diversity of housing types and social mix over the entire urban region.

- Transportation plan: including a plan for infrastructure development (subways, commuter trains, autoroutes, main roads, port and airport infrastructures), and integration of transit services and fares.

- Priority public investments: prioritization of public investment in the region that will support the regional plan.

The Task force proposed a structure that was designed to allay municipal fears of centralization and domination. By recommending only indirectly elected councillors on the Metropolitan Council, by decentralizing many services to the ISAs, and by proposing that tax

inequities be addressed by diversifying taxation sources rather than pooling property on a regional level,[5] the Task force tried to engineer a compromise between the central city and suburban municipalities. It was also careful not to arrogate to the regional level any functions closely guarded by municipal officials, e.g., control over residential development decisions.

4.7.1.2 Reaction to the Task Force

Following the commission's report, there was a variety of reactions, some favourable and some unfavourable. Suburban municipalities emerged as the most vocal opponents to the Pichette report. Municipalities in the region are organized into a number of associations that reflect the fractured nature of regional interests: the mayors of the suburban municipalities on the island of Montreal have their own association (the Conference of Suburban Mayors) and a similar structure has emerged on the North Shore, including Laval. On the South Shore, an informal coalition of municipalities has similarly sprung up [CUI 94-1]. The only two municipalities to endorse the Pichette report were the mayors of Montreal and Longueuil. Other mayors in the region have publicly spoken out against the report and the notion of a metropolitan council. They advance a number of arguments, including that a metropolitan council would mean more distant and unresponsive government, but particularly that a metropolitan council would mean higher taxes in suburban areas and more control for the City of Montreal over the growth of outlying areas. Thus, the main fear is that metropolitan government would prevent suburban municipalities from competing with the municipalities of the MUC and thereby undermine their growth prospects.

To implement regional structures given this situation would require forceful action by the provincial government. The current government is strongly supported by suburban mayors on the South and North Shores, but has little support from within the MUC, where the benefits of regional governance would be most felt. Mayors are powerful lobbyists in provincial election campaigns and exert considerable influence at the Assemblé Nationale in Quebec City. Without their support, it is unlikely that the provincial government could act in the absence of a ground swell of support from other social actors.

Some major stakeholders in the Montreal area show a relatively low level of interest in regional issues: the Urban Development Institute has not been active in addressing region-wide issues and has no position on sprawl; and the Quebec Home Builders Association is comprised of a large number of small builders who are primarily interested in promoting housing development, often on the urban fringe. There are no regional environmental groups that concern themselves with urban form issues, and social planning and advocacy groups operate mostly at the local level. There are few organized fora for the integration of central city and suburban interests, either at the municipal or the provincial level.

In contrast, major business and labour interests are strongly in favour of region-wide solutions to the economic problems besetting the area. They realize that Montreal as a region is

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[5] For instance, the report proposed that the City of Montreal and other core municipalities should receive a portion of the provincial sales taxes collected within their territories.

competing against other city-regions in North America for footloose investment. Thus, rather than being preoccupied with conflicts between the suburbs and the central city, or between the North or South Shore, some economic interests in the region are aware of the need to promote economic coherence in the region as a whole. The Board of Trade of Metropolitan Montreal has been one of the most vocal supporters of the Task force's report. Metropolitan-wide planning is essential, according to the Board, to build the economic coherence of the region and introduce policies to combat sprawl and revive the city centre. Furthermore, financial institutions and businesses, concentrated in the central area, are clearly concerned about the potential loss in investment values if the centre continues to decline. Likewise, the Montreal Metropolitan Labour Council, which includes the island of Montreal, Laval and the South Shore, also supports regional growth management policies to limit sprawl and strengthen the regional centre. The Council is in favour of development and housing policies to direct growth to the already urbanized areas and that will permit higher densities as a way to reduce the cost of services (and therefore of taxation levels) and the price of housing.

The Pichette report proposed a new level of government and threatened suburban municipalities by promising to serve as a mechanism to steer fiscal resources to the City of Montreal. Given suburban resistance to the task force's report and the political importance of suburban constituencies, it is no surprise that the report has not yet been decisively acted upon. If the province is to act on the task force report, it will clearly be balancing the economic imperatives facing the region with the interests of municipal stakeholders opposed to regional government. On the positive side, it appears that many suburban municipalities recognize the importance of coordinating service delivery and planning on a regional scale, and that there is a consensus that the City of Montreal should be a strong core to the region. Thus, it does not follow that because suburban municipalities resist metropolitan government, they do not recognize the need for metropolitan planning.[6]

4.7.1.3 Provincial-MRC Metropolitan Planning

Although a metropolitan government is one obvious means to achieve more effective growth management, other regional planning initiatives that rely on existing institutions, specifically the MRCs, are quietly being explored by the province.

We have seen that although the 12 MRCs in the Montreal region did produce official plans, with land use designations and infrastructure policies, they were often mere compilations of lower-tier aspirations and therefore tended to confirm existing development patterns. Furthermore, the MRC plans were themselves poorly coordinated across the metropolitan region. A second round of official planning is now being undertaken by the MRCs, this time with more policy guidance provided by the province on the contents of each plan, and more coordination required between them.

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[6] An illustration of this regional awareness is provided by the recent proposal before the Conference of Suburban Mayors to create a regional superstructure. The metropolitan council would not have the power to raise taxes or redistribute municipal revenue and would not deal with many of the portfolios recommended by Pichette, e.g., solid waste, arts and culture. But it would have significant powers over economic development, transportation planning and land use planning.

Provincial policy guidance has taken the form of new planning policies to govern MRC planning activities. These policies include:

- promote the consolidation of existing urban areas, favour more compact development patterns at higher densities, and provide for a greater mix of land uses
- give priority to the revitalization of downtowns and older areas
- manage the extension of urban envelopes so as to minimize economic costs (such as the need for new infrastructure), and to promote the economic feasibility of public transit
- manage the extension of the urban envelope so as to minimize environmental costs, such as the consumption of farmland, and to respect provincial environmental policies on waterways, shorelines and floodplains, and so forth
- improve housing conditions and adapt housing supply to the changing socio-economic context.

The Ministry is also asking the MRCs within urban agglomerations to adopt an integrated planning approach for the whole urban region. For instance, the province is requiring that the plans be temporally coordinated, i.e., that they come into effect at the same time. It is also asking the MRCs to reconcile their development aspirations among themselves, for instance, by allocating expected population growth for the whole urban region to specific MRCs, and to arrive at an efficient urban structure by designating growth nodes and the infrastructure required to support them. The MRCs are also asked to facilitate the coordination of planning decisions with other actors in the urban region.

Clearly, these policies are an attempt by the province to address many of the weaknesses of the first-generation plans. They flesh out some of the principles contained the 1978 Preferred Option and apply them directly to the second-generation of MRC planning. The province is asking the MRCs to adopt policies that will lead to a well-consolidated urban area, making best use of existing land and services. Growth at the fringe will have to be better justified, and based on adequate services, transportation links, and public transportation. Where such growth takes place, it must be more compact than has conventionally been the case.

The policies are less specific and directive when it comes to the housing provision. They do not ask the MRCs to take steps to ensure a wide range of housing types or an adequate social mix in their development decisions. In fact, the policies take pains to ensure that municipalities do not perceive them as a threat to municipal authority over housing development.

Nonetheless, the provincial policies appear to be favourable to intensification. It is difficult to predict, however, how they will play out in practice. For instance, it is not known whether local politicians will be able to achieve consensus on allocating growth and infrastructure investment across the metropolitan region. Also, although nodal growth is widely considered to be the most efficient, implementing the concept becomes problematic when decisions have

to be made on where the nodes and the connecting transportation corridors will actually be located.

The recent experience with the mayors' round table (la table des préfets et maires du Grand Montréal) has not been promising in this respect. The round table was formed by municipalities in the region in order to demonstrate to the provincial government their ability to resolve regional growth management issues without the need for a provincially-imposed superstructure. However, tensions between the central city and suburban municipalities have prevented the round table from addressing many key growth management issues.

In order to facilitate the process of metropolitan planning through MRC second-generation plans, the Quebec government was considering a strategic growth management plan for the Montreal region in 1996. Although confidential at the time of writing, it appears that the Ministry of Municipal Affairs is willing to move ahead with regional growth management in the Montreal area, using its approval powers over MRCs to achieve its policy objectives. This task may be aided by the recent creation of the Ministry of State for the Metropolis, with a mandate to:

- coordinate efforts relating to land use and transportation planning
- contribute to the dialogue between the Québec government and municipalities, the Canadian government, and the private sector
- coordinate the actions of the government ministries in the region
- contribute to economic, social, and cultural development of the Montreal metropolitan region.

If a metropolitan government or planning agency is ever established in the region, some of the preliminary work on elaborating a regional vision will have already been accomplished, and can be integrated into the new institutional arrangements.

4.7.2 Improving Links Between Agricultural Land Preservation and Land Use Planning

To the extent that the policy statements issued by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs discussed above will encourage a more orderly extension of the urban fabric, they will help address some of the pressure on the commission to dezone lands. Under the current regime, local municipalities approve 98 percent of dezoning requests coming to them from developers, irrespective of whether these requests comply with or violate municipal planning policies.[7] If the new planning policies are implemented as stated, this situation can be expected to

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[7] Perhaps this reflects the reluctance of municipal officials to obstruct the economic aspirations of the development community. Reportedly, some municipalities have told the commission, "you should say 'no' to this guy" after having recommended approval of the dezoning application.

improve. But beyond this, the policy statements will do little to enhance agricultural land protection in the region.

At present, there is no agency or process to question a municipality that allows its rural lands to be developed at low densities. Because the Commission for the Protection of Agricultural Land is the agency responsible for dezoning lands, it is in a good position to carry out this function. At present, however, its ability to play this role is constrained by a lack of integration with the land use planning process:

- there is no legislative link between the Planning Act and the Agricultural Lands Protection Act
- although the Ministry of Municipal Affairs is consulted on dezoning proposals, it rarely makes deputations at tribunal hearings
- the commission does not have the jurisdiction to evaluate the need for land development: its jurisdiction is limited to whether or not there will be an impact on the surrounding agricultural land base.

The result is that the commission's decisions have tended to slow down the rate of sprawl, but they have not provided an overall framework for the rational expansion of the urban region. The commission cannot raise questions about the desirability of the proposal from a metropolitan perspective or recommend that the development should take place in another part of the region. In the absence of a metropolitan planning authority, the Commission for the Protection of Agricultural Land Protection is the only regulatory authority with a geographical scope that encompasses the whole urban region. Thus, it may be called upon to play a stronger role in the future in preventing urban sprawl.

4.7.3 Improving the Integration and Delivery of Transit

A common theme in discussions about creating a more compact Montreal region is the need for a regional transportation plan. Such a plan would promote the use of public transit over automobile use and reduce the impetus toward auto-dependent land uses. It would give MRCs and local municipalities direction on growth and development issues and lead to more proactive regional planning rather than to reactive, sprawling growth. There are two key challenges associated with this effort: covering costs and creating an administrative regime that is seen as legitimate throughout the region.

The creation of the MUC in 1970 led to the take-over of transit services on the island of Montreal by a single operator, but it excluded the rapidly growing suburban municipalities. By 1986, the suburban municipalities had formed a further 23 transit authorities in the Montreal region, and a large number of intermunicipal transit agreements (Frisken 1994b).

The problems with this arrangement were obvious. First, the MUC was subsidizing transportation services that were being heavily used by suburban residents in their daily commutes onto the island and suburban municipalities refused to help pay for the services.

This included not only the subways and bus system; even the suburban trains serving the off-island suburbs were being operated and funded by the MUC Transit Commission. Secondly, the lack of coordination among the large number of transit authorities resulted in an inefficient system that was doing nothing to promote transit use as the region grew and travel behaviour adapted to include cross-regional trips.

In an attempt to resolve these issues, the province brokered an agreement in 1989 between the MUCTC and the Laval and South Shore transit agencies. The aim was to set up a regional transit coordinating agency (CMTC) to arrive at a more equitable distribution of costs and benefits in the region, and to get consensus on new projects such as subways or bus lanes on bridges. The province agreed to subsidize the costs of operating the CMTC in order to reduce conflict among its members, and to pay the full capital costs associated with subway and commuter rail expansion.

In 1990, however, the Ryan Reforms were introduced, which entailed a massive cut in transfers to municipalities for transit operations.[8] Then, in 1995, the province announced that it would stop two major transit subsidies in Montreal: one for suburban trains and one for the CMTC. Furthermore, arguments among members of the CMTC have prevented them from arriving at a workable regional plan. The council is widely considered to be a failure and will likely be abolished in the near future. This would leave the region without a metropolitan perspective in planning transit and transportation.

In a renewed attempt to address regional transportation issues, the Ministry of Transportation set up a new metropolitan transportation planning agency in 1996. Instead of allowing the agency to be neutralized by disputes among political representative of the constituent municipalities, the government has decided that it will be directed by three provincially-appointed administrators. The agency (L'agence de Transport Metropolitaine des Personne) will administer the metropolitan system of transit, including the subway system, suburban trains, and the intermunicipal bus lanes. It will also administer the regional road system, including autoroutes and major boulevards. It will plan and establish fares for the sub-regional transit agencies, and redistribute revenues to reflect the geographic distribution of users throughout the metropolitan region. The commission will ensure that the various sub-regional systems will be coordinated in terms of routes and schedules in order to facilitate cross-regional transport. Finally, the commission will plan and oversee the investment of new funds in the regional transportation system. In this matter, it will take direction from a new regional transportation plan that the government is drawing up in conjunction with local stakeholders.

Getting suburban municipalities to agree to this proposal is a key challenge to its realization. The plan will lead to lower levels of financial burden for the MUC and higher levels for Laval and the South Shore. Some municipalities in the region with no transit services whatsoever will nonetheless pay into the regional fund. Not surprisingly then, there has been some resistance from these quarters. However, implementation may be eased by graduating the increase in funding levels for suburban municipalities, and by imposing new taxes—such as on

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[8] In return, municipalities were give the authority to impose taxes on parking and commercial properties.

gas and parking—or by introducing electronic tolls for road usage. These instruments would not only tend to increase funding for transit, but would discourage car use and car-dependent development.

4.7.4 Improving Links Between Land Use Planning and Transportation Planning

Less than adequate attention has been paid to the connection between land use and public transit in the Montreal region, both at the level of metropolitan planning and at the local level.

A loose regional urban structure has emerged that includes Montreal's central business district as its hub, three sub-centres on the island of Montreal (Anjou, St. Laurent, Pointe-Claire) and two off-island sub-centres (Laval, Longueuil). But this urban structure has not been greatly encouraged through higher order transit investments (as is the case in Toronto and Vancouver). In 1988, the Liberal government responded to growing automobile congestion with a transportation plan calling for the expenditure of $1.6 billion for system improvements in the metropolitan region. This announcement was severely criticized for promoting sprawl (Frisken 1994b). Critics pointed to the new highways that would be built in the outer part of the region, and to the subway extension to Montreal North, where commuters from Laval could be served, rather than to Ville d'Anjou, where the MUC had already identified a sub-centre growth node.

A major initiative by the Ministry of Transportation—with the participation of the Ministry of Municipal Affairs—presents an opportunity to address this issue. In creating a transportation plan for the Montreal region, the Ministry has identified urban sprawl as a prime cause of growing inefficiencies in the transport system. The main principals behind this planning exercise are:

- promote the integration of the various modes of transport
- promote public transit
- optimize the use of existing infrastructure.

If the plan that eventually emerges from this process is based on these principles, it will tend to favour land use intensification. The major emphasis is on demand management rather than infrastructure extension and new investment proposals (Ministry of Transportation 1995). According to provincial officials, land use planning as a means of managing the demand for new auto-based infrastructure and as a way of enhancing the viability of transit will be an important part of the proposals that emerge from this planning exercise.

At the local level, the province has traditionally shown little interest in promoting forms of land use that would increase transit use and reduce costs. With the first generation of MRC plans the province required only that MRCs identify the major transportation requirements to support the land use projections of the plan. No mention was made of the need to reduce transportation investments by implementing transit-supportive land uses.

The 1994 revisions to the Planning and Development Act have corrected this situation to some extent by directing the attention of that MRCs to the link between land use and transit planning. Guidelines issued by the Ministry of Transportation in 1994, entitled Transportation Planning and Revising Regional Official Plans (Planification des Transports et révision des Schémas d'aménagement) were designed to give the MRCs guidance in linking land use and transportation in their second generation reviews. "In order to minimize urban sprawl, which affects not only the efficiency of the transport system but also entails significant costs in infrastructure and other services, the MRC may attempted to modify these tendencies" by using the following measures (Ministry of Transportation 1994, 3-86):

- establish an urban boundary that would consolidate the urban tissue
- indicate priority zones for development and redevelopment and densities within these zones
- raise the densities along principal transit routes
- diversify land use in order to reduce automobile dependency.

Given the importance of this problem, these considerations seem somewhat superficial. The guidelines do not lay out desirable urban form from a transit point of view, do not discuss the major role of urban structure in promoting transit use, give no guidance on urban design issues such road grids, are largely optional in character, and are not accompanied by any target densities.

4.7.5 Overcoming Tax Competition and Inequities

The large number and small size of many municipalities in the Montreal region has already been mentioned. Combined with their unusual dependence on tax revenue and the corresponding need to increase the assessment base, this has resulted in overzoning for residential development and other land uses. In 1993, zoning bylaws in the region were sufficient to accommodate a population of seven million, i.e., over twice the current population. Yet, rezonings of land to urban use are occurring every day in the region.

Merging existing municipalities into larger communities is one way of dealing with the fiscal impetus to sprawl. Unfortunately, municipal amalgamation is also a politically risky undertaking because of the link between local identity and municipal structure, the sense of community engendered by small municipalities, and the presumed greater opportunities for democratic participation they offer. Cognizant of these issues, in 1993 the Quebec government announced a plan to encourage cities and towns to merge.

The plan was to merge 375 small communities across Quebec into 187 larger municipalities. Rather than using a stick approach, the government offered carrots: to offer grants and technical assistance to municipalities that would agree to merge. The program is supported by the main municipal associations in Quebec, labour unions and business interests. In the Montreal area, several municipalities are considering exploiting the opportunity offered by the

government. Movement toward amalgamation may be strengthened by current trends toward reduced provincial transfers and the fiscal self-reliance of municipalities: amalgamation may become a municipal strategy to reduce administrative costs and make service delivery more efficient.

It should be recognized, however, that municipal amalgamation can only go so far in addressing sprawl. While it may reduce the incentive for suburban communities to compete with one another for new low-density residential and non-residential development, it will do little to dampen the competition of suburban municipalities with higher-tax municipalities on the island of Montreal. In order to address the latter problem, some form of fundamental fiscal reform will be required. Toward this end, Serge Ménard, Quebec's Minister of State for the Metropolis since 1996, suggested that a uniform tax for non-residential properties be instituted across the Montreal region (*Globe and Mail* February 6, 1996, A2).

4.7.6 Recognizing the True Costs of Sprawl

A frequently cited cause of sprawl in the region is the lack of correspondence between the cost of housing on the urban fringe and the true costs associated with low-density fringe growth. In Quebec, infrastructure was traditionally paid for and constructed by municipalities, in part because developers and builders were too small to handle such large expenses.[9] In recent years, subdivision agreements with developers have become more common, but they have generally dealt only with on-site hard costs. As transfers from the province have declined, there is increasing pressure for developers and home owners to pay the true costs associated with new development. Since 1994, the Planning Act has permitted municipalities in Quebec to require that developers construct infrastructure or facilities made necessary by a development, or to pay all or part of the costs where the municipality builds these services (Slack 1994).

This is clearly a step toward internalizing some of the costs of suburban development and will probably dampen the impetus to sprawl. Further challenges remain in this respect. First, the legislation does not permit municipalities to charge developers for soft infrastructure, such as police stations, fire stations, libraries, and so on. Secondly, charges are generally applied on a municipal-wide basis and do not reflect the marginal costs of new development in unserviced, high-cost locations. The Federation of Quebec Municipalities has proposed that development charges be scaled on a geographical basis, so as to increase in areas requiring the extension of services.

4.7.7 Building Support for Intensification at the Local Level

The issue of "sprawl" has a relatively high profile in the Montreal region: it has been consistently raised by university-based academics, by the City of Montreal, by the Quebec Institute of Urban Planners, and by the Task Force on Greater Montreal. The topic of sprawl is frequently raised in the Montreal press as a policy issue and a problem of public concern. In

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[9] In 1992, only 6.4 percent of capital spending by municipalities was finance by developer contributions.

contrast, "intensification" (or "densification" in French) is not in common use in the Montreal region. As a policy issue, interviewees claimed that intensification is of concern only to urban professionals. However, the issue is raised on a project-by-project basis when the density of new development becomes a concern to local stakeholders.

4.7.7.1 MUC

For a number of reasons, conflict over intensification projects is less frequent in the MUC than in the central areas of other metropolitan regions studied:

- Large scale intensification projects are relatively uncommon.
- Because there has been less redevelopment of industrial land on the island, labour unions have not developed positions and campaigns to preserve industrial land in the face of intensification proposals.
- Because the provincial government's standards on former industrial site remediation and its funding for decontamination programs are supportive of redevelopment efforts, this has not been raised as a controversial issue on the island.
- Because the demand for housing is low in the central area, there is less pressure from developers to redevelop or infill lands within established residential areas.
- Because the rate of home ownership is low and because ratepayer and residents' association tend be fewer in number, citizen resistance to intensification projects does not appear to be as pervasive as in other metropolitan areas.
- The issue of basement apartments does not have a high profile on the island of Montreal. This may be because the province has not tried to force acceptance of this housing form and because much of the existing built form is inappropriate for basement apartments, i.e., the plex form.
- Because housing densities are historically relatively high in the mature areas of the region, residents appear to be less disturbed by proposals for infill development. In the City of Montreal, for instance, only 8 percent of the housing stock is single-detached.
- The issue of housing affordability has not been critical in the Montreal region, reducing the number of actors demanding intensification policies.
- Environmental groups oppose sprawling development onto the island's remaining open and green spaces but have not actively promoted intensification as a policy choice.

- The high level of poverty in the City of Montreal has given rise to a number of advocacy groups that frequently raise awareness of the need for low cost, high-density housing when project opportunities arise.[10]

- Many municipal councils in the mature areas of the island tend to be favourably disposed toward intensification projects as a way to revitalize economically and demographically declining areas, and to increase public safety by adding to street activity.

There is conflict over particular intensification projects in the Montreal region. In such cases, the issues raised are much the same as those encountered in the other case study regions: parking and traffic congestion, loss of neighbourhood character due to heights and densities, and loss of open space. Planners and local politicians are aware of the risks associated with intensification and tend to avoid supporting planning policies and development proposals that will trigger local conflict. As in Vancouver and Toronto, our review of intensification planning policies in the MUC showed that there are few initiatives to densify established residential neighbourhoods on the island, and most municipal interviewees acknowledged that projects out of character with existing neighbourhoods would be politically unpopular.

There are, however, a few unique features to local intensification conflicts in Montreal. The overburdening of local services is rarely raised in newspaper accounts as an objection to intensification projects, perhaps because many parts of the island have suffered population losses and therefore have surpluses in infrastructure and services. Also rarely mentioned in the Montreal press is the potential for intensification projects to lead to social problems and more crime. Instead, the issue seems to be concern over introducing higher-income people into impoverished neighbourhoods, such as in the Nouveau Montreal projects and the adaptive reuse of industrial buildings in the City of Montreal.

High unemployment levels have also raised resistance to conversion of industrial lands and buildings to residential use. Working class neighbourhoods adjacent to the Lachine Canal in the City of Montreal successfully blocked some planned conversions to up-scale condos on the grounds that this form of gentrification was cutting off access of local workers to industrial jobs and increasing local property values and taxes.

Reflecting the age of the older parts of the central city, built heritage is often raised as an issue in intensification projects in the City of Montreal. For instance, the projects associated with Nouveau Montreal—most of which are in the old port area—have raised protests from archeological groups. Other projects entailing the demolition of heritage buildings have attracted objectors from the very strong heritage movement in Montreal.

Another unique feature of that pertains to municipalities other than the City of Montreal is the availability of the municipal referendum as an instrument of local resistance to intensification

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[10] For instance, the Popular Action Front for Urban Renewal, a coalition of 40 tenants' groups, has been active in lobbying for higher density housing on the former site of the Paul Sauvé arena in east-end Montreal, has supported the redevelopment of the CMHC lands at Benny Farm, and has campaigned for more funds at the provincial, federal, and municipal level for high-density social housing projects.

projects. According to Quebec law, residents of adjacent properties have the legal right to initiate a referendum on a zoning bylaw if at least 500 signatures are attached to a petition to city council. This has been an effective means of blocking high-density projects or gaining leverage to reduce densities in several recent cases.

4.7.7.2 Off-Island Suburbs

We have seen that in off-island suburbs, the higher-density, slower growth municipalities adjacent to the island have adopted planning policies that would favour higher-density new development and the consolidation of existing residential areas. It is important to note, however, that in all but a handful of the off-island suburbs, single-family housing is still the predominant form of development. Many municipalities have adopted planning policies and zoning regulations designed to prevent dramatic changes to the nature of the existing built environment or to the nature of new development. Zoning regulations adopted by councils often:

- place minimum lot requirements on new development
- restrict the amount of land available for medium or higher-density housing, often by placing explicit policies in official plans to maintain a high percentage (80-85 percent) of the housing stock as the single-detached type
- limit the height of buildings, often to three storeys
- prohibit basement apartments.

These policies reflect the unwillingness of suburban municipalities to accept the fiscal burdens they associate with low-cost housing, such as low assessments and high demand for municipal services like police, fire, recreational and library services. Local politicians fear that higher-density housing will bring crime and social decay. Social housing for seniors is the exception that proves the rule: suburban municipalities have been relatively open to higher-density senior citizen projects because these are not generally associated with social disruption.

4.7.7.3 Discussion

A public debate about intensification as a potential policy solution to sprawl may help to sensitize local decision makers and residents to the benefits of intensification in achieving regional objectives. Greater acceptance of intensification in the central areas could help increase developer interest in central city investment; and in suburban areas, greater acceptance could lead to more balanced housing stock, better use of infrastructure, and transit-supportive land development. A policy discussion could also help address the disadvantages of local intensification projects—such as shadowing, traffic, and design—and build confidence that these will be overcome through better planning practices.

There are a number of social groups that could help to carry on such a discussion: municipal planners, tenants' organization and anti-poverty groups, business associations and labour

unions. However, the provincial government is in the best position to initiate the discussion and set its terms through research, public consultations, and education campaigns.

4.8 Concluding Comments

There are three main obstacles to effective growth management and intensification in the Montreal region:

- inability of province to effectively coordinate its own interventions in the metropolitan area
- inability of municipalities in the metropolitan area to resolve growth management issues
- weak influence of provincial government on municipal planning for growth management and intensification.

These points will serve as the focus for our concluding comments.

4.8.1 Uneven coordination of provincial interventions in the metropolitan area

The provincial government has shown little interest in creating a truly metropolitan planning agency for the region. With more than half the population of Quebec in the Montreal region, the province has clearly been reluctant to create a metropolitan administrative super-structure that would rival its own political influence (Trépanier 1993). Instead, the provincial government has continued to act as the only public entity capable of mediating conflict among local interests and acting on the metropolitan scale.

By adopting the Preferred Option, the province recognized the importance of coordinating its own interventions in the Montreal region as a way to control sprawl and encourage more orderly growth patterns. To be successful, provincial coordination would be necessary among at least four key ministries: Municipal Affairs, Transportation, Agriculture, and Housing.

This has been only partially achieved. Success is most visible with respect to the revitalization of older city cores, where provincial housing programs have encouraged commercial and residential rehabilitation, taxation policies have permitted municipalities to provide financial assistance to private redevelopment efforts within a plan of revitalization, environmental policies have been designed not to stymie industrial land redevelopment, and financial incentives have been offered for decontamination efforts.

Coordination to prevent sprawl is a different story. Efforts to do so seem to have gradually dissipated in the aftermath of the Preferred Option. The strongest policy to prevent sprawl in Quebec is the Agricultural Land Protection Act, but this Act and its administration are poorly integrated with the policies and administrative activities of the Ministry of Municipal Affairs. Transportation investment has also been imperfectly coordinated with regional planning objectives. Finally, housing policy—especially the system of mortgage guarantees and subsidies—is routinely cited as a source of suburban sprawl.

The inability of the provincial governments to enforce consistency and uniformity among its various ministries is typical of all the case study areas. To some extent it reflects the complexity of policy making in a modern state with multiple layers of jurisdiction (for instance, provincial housing policy is partially determined by spending in this sector by the Federal government), but it also reflects the rivalry among local interests in the Montreal region itself. This is the reality underlying the next sub-section.

4.8.2 Inability of municipalities in the metropolitan area to resolve growth management issues

Another feature of the Montreal case study is the very low level of cooperation between central city and suburban municipalities. Conflict is fueled by historic grievances. The City of Montreal resents the power that rural and suburban municipalities have traditionally wielded in Quebec City, despite their lesser population and economic importance, while suburban municipalities resent the mega-project profligacy of the City of Montreal and feel they are now being asked to pay for it. Ethnic and class cleavages, and the decline of the economic dependence of suburban municipalities on the central city also contribute to conflict (Sancton 1985).

Distrust and conflict has hobbled regional land use and transportation planning in the area for decades. In 1969, the province imposed regional planning in the form of the MUC, but the latter has been prevented from developing an effective strategic plan by conflict among island municipalities. Metropolitan planning for the entire region has been impossible, given the level of distrust between the City of Montreal and the off-island suburban municipalities. More recent attempts by area municipalities to show that they are capable of independently resolving metropolitan issues have proved that the municipalities in the region require some form of arbitrator with the authority and political legitimacy to impose metropolitan solutions on divergent interests. This may come in the form of a more proactive provincial planning authority (if the province chooses to pursue the notion of a strategic growth management plan for the Montreal region), or in the form of a metropolitan superstructure (such as that proposed by the Pichette task force).

4.8.3 Weak influence of provincial government on municipal planning for growth management and intensification.

We have seen that the province has attempted to influence municipal planning through a variety of regulatory activities:

- institutional reform (e.g., creation the MUC and MRCs as vehicles for managing sub-regional growth, creation of the Commission for the Protection of Agricultural Land)
- legislative changes (e.g., the Planning and Development Act and recent modifications)
- policy changes (e.g., the recent policy statements and transportation guidelines)

The impact of these reforms is debatable. While they have certainly improved the quality of local planning from the totally inadequate role it played in Quebec only 25 years ago, many observers believe that they have had little impact on the actual development pattern endorsed by local municipalities. Recent changes to the Planning and Development Act, policy statements and guidelines show a willingness to respond to these charges, but our review raises the question as to whether they will go very far in addressing the substantive problems. Growth management policies are vague and lack definable targets and control mechanisms, and municipal control over residential development is almost completely unchallenged by provincial policies.

Rather than attempting to exercise direct regulatory control over municipal decisions that affect the spatial aspects of residential development, the provincial housing policy has been exercised through funding. That is, the province has supported residential renovation policies that only indirectly and imperfectly favour intensification of mature areas and do nothing to increase the density of new development on greenfield sites.

One reason for this outcome may be the overriding respect for municipal autonomy shown by the province. This, in turn, may reflect two conditions: the strong decentralist ideology in Quebec, and the loss of leverage occasioned by the decision to move toward the fiscal independence of municipalities.

4.8.4 Growth Management Versus Intensification

These considerations help to explain one remarkable feature of the Montreal case study: that growth management at the regional level is a major policy issue whereas at the local level, intensification is little remarked as a policy issue.

This can be at least partially explained by the policy orientations of the provincial government. We have seen that the Quebec government has shown a long-standing interest in promoting regional growth management, i.e., stopping sprawl and concentrating development on the island and near shore areas. It has launched a variety of policy initiatives such as the Commission for the Protection of Agricultural Land, elaboration of the Preferred Option, and more recently, direction to the MRCs in their second round of official planning. These initiatives have stirred a great deal of discussion, research, and commentary on the problems associated with sprawl and the best means to address the issue.

In contrast, the government has shown little enthusiasm for translating these planning visions into a regulatory framework that would dramatically constrain municipal decision-making in matters related to residential development.[11] It has shown little interest in forcing municipalities to adopt planning policies that would diversify the housing stock throughout the

[11] The partial exception to this rule is the Agricultural Land Protection Commission. But we have seen that although it turns down most requests from private land owners, the commission approves about 80 percent of the requests coming to it from the municipalities. Thus it functions principally to reduce the growth aspirations of private land owners but confirms those of municipalities.

urban region, imposing minimum densities on new development, or setting local intensification targets.

These policy positions of the province are somewhat contradictory: provincial objectives for regional growth management can hardly be achieved without altering the regime of local decision-making that controls the spatial dimension of housing supply.

5. Conclusions

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the main research findings across the three case studies are synthesized. Following some observations on general issues, the chapter offers some comments on provincial planning, metropolitan planning, and municipal planning.

5.2 General Issues

Growth-related issues were similar across the three urban regions: economic, fiscal, environmental, and social concerns were evident in each. However, significant variations among the regions are also detectable in terms of the priority afforded the various issues. In the Vancouver region, environmental issues such as air pollution, energy use, and the consumption of agricultural land are of very high priority, as are concerns about land and housing supply, and affordability. In contrast, these issues are not in the foreground in Montreal. There, fiscal issues and regional economic development are paramount in thinking about growth management and controlling sprawl. The main concerns are to develop the infrastructure required to increase the efficiency of the urban system, find an equitable formula for sharing the costs of regional services and infrastructure, and engender a regional identity to attract outside investment. Growth-related issues in the Toronto region have evolved over the last decade, from housing supply and affordability and environment issues in the late 1980s, to economic development, apportionment of the fiscal burden, and concerns over a declining core in the 1990s.

Another way of expressing the differences among the three regions with respect to the issue context would be to remark on the social interests involved. Although it would be an exaggeration to call them coalitions, two "camps" can be discerned on the regional political landscape: those who advocate greater coordination of public investment and provincial transfers in order to remove barriers to conventional growth patterns, and those who want to redirect conventional growth patterns in order to prevent a deterioration in the quality of life, the polarization of the classes, and environmental decay. In short, the first group is advocating development and the second, sustainable development. Although both camps tend to agree that some form of provincial action is required to direct growth and set priorities for infrastructure investment, their political agendas are quite distinct: the former favours growth as an end in itself, whereas the latter favours managing growth in order to achieve other collective goals and to minimize externalities associated with growth.

In Montreal, it is the former group that is paramount in regional issues, perhaps best represented by the Board of Trade. In Vancouver, those speaking the language of growth management are in the ascendancy, recognizing the need to control and even oppose growth in order to maintain the quality of the regional environment and mitigate the adverse social impacts of rapid growth. In Toronto, centre stage was occupied by growth management

speakers at the turn of the decade, but has since been turned over to the advocates of regional economic development, with declining concern afforded to the externalities associated with unmanaged growth.

To some extent these findings probably reflect the differential in rates of population and employment growth—both recent and expected—between Vancouver and Toronto on the one hand, and Montreal on the other hand.

Some general observations on the importance of growth management and intensification as policy issues in the three regions can also be offered. Sprawl and intensification are largely issues of concern to a professional cadre in each region, including provincial officials, municipal and private planners, academics, architects and some journalists. As far as the larger public is concerned, however, the need to plan on a regional basis and to manage growth is more widely recognized in Toronto and Vancouver than in Montreal, where the link between regional economic development and land use is still tenuous. Likewise, intensification (or "densification" as it is known in Vancouver and Montreal) is of much greater concern in Vancouver and Toronto where provincial and metropolitan policy efforts are strongest in forcing municipalities and neighbourhoods to address the issue.

5.3 Provincial Planning Policies

In all three cases, provincial governments have expressed a policy interest in controlling sprawl and encouraging more compact urban forms. All three regions show the same range of provincial strategies: direct provincial involvement in metropolitan growth management through infrastructure investment, creating metropolitan and sub-metropolitan planning institutions, and exerting influence over municipal planning.

However, the emphasis given to these various policy instruments has been markedly different across the three case study regions. In the Vancouver region, the province has kept control of certain metropolitan growth management levers (such as regional transit and highway planning, and the arm's length Commission for the Protection of Agricultural Land), but has chosen to rely heavily on regional institutions, which in turn rely on municipal cooperation for their effectiveness. The province has made little attempt directly to influence municipal planning policies in managing growth or promoting denser or more affordable housing.

In the Toronto region, the provincial government has used the broadest range of policy instruments: it has intervened directly in metropolitan planning decisions over major tranportation and sewerage investment, has attempted to create more of a top-down metropolitan planning regime through the OGTA, and has forcefully attempted to control municipal planning policies through its official plan review process.

In the Montreal region, provincial policy instruments have been less forceful: the province makes the key decisions concerning transportation and transit planning and has established the Commission for the Protection of Agricultural Land, but has not made any attempt to create

institutions of metropolitan cooperation, and has intervened little in municipal planning decisions.

To some extent, these variations reflect differences in institutional arrangements and political cultures among the three regions. In the Vancouver region, the various levels of government accept the need for cooperative, non-hierarchical planning and mutual adjustment, reflected best in the recent Growth Strategies Act. Municipalities generally enjoy a high degree of legal autonomy with respect to growth management and housing issues.

In the Montreal region, municipal autonomy is also important from an ideological point of view as part of the nationalist vision, but mechanisms of metropolitan cooperation are less developed. Municipalities do cooperate on the basis of intermunicipal agreements but region-wide cooperation has proved elusive.

These observations point to the continued importance of provincial decision-making in managing growth in the major metropolitan regions of Canada. Given their size and jurisdictional complexity, and the reluctance of provincial governments to create rival metropolitan-wide municipal entities with upwards of the half the provincial population, this is to be expected. The principal differences among the three areas relate to the strength and character of metropolitan planning institutions and of provincial intervention in local planning decisions. Each of these will now be considered in more detail.

5.4 Metropolitan Planning Policies

The metropolitan governance and planning institutions in the three regions vary widely. Vancouver has a single two-tier system that incorporates over 96 percent of the CMA population, while in Toronto, there are five upper-tier governments and in Montreal there are 13. However, no region has an effective metropolitan-wide planning authority in place.

In Vancouver, the GVRD has a long-standing metropolitan planning framework, but is relatively weak in its implementing authority compared to the powers of, say, upper-tier governments in Ontario. Even with their considerable planning powers, however, upper-tier governments in Ontario cannot serve as effective instruments of metropolitan-wide planning because of the obvious spatial fragmentation and competition among them for population, employment, and infrastructure spending. The Office for the Greater Toronto Area has brokered a plan including a vague urban structure and urban envelope, and population and employment allocations to upper-tier municipalities. The Montreal region has no metropolitan-wide administrative structure and no regional plan to coordinate the extremely large number of municipal governments in the region.

In all three regions, there is some evidence that provincial governments are loath to institute effective regional governance and create planning institutions that could challenge the provinces for power. This was most clearly seen in the case of Vancouver where the provincial government actually disbanded a rival municipal institution (the Lower Mainland Regional Planning Board), and later stripped the GVRD of its planning authority; but many

observers believe that this is also the case in Montreal and Toronto, where provincial governments have tried a number of governing innovations but have avoided metropolitan-wide institutions under municipal control. Whether or not this is a telling insight will be shown by provincial action (or inaction) in these two regions on recent reform proposals recommended by task forces set up by the provinces themselves.

In all three regions, the dynamics of regional planning are similar: the central cities offer general support for regional planning, while suburban municipalities resist it wholesale or in key parts. Suburban resistance is especially strong when regional planning involves tax pooling or other forms of fiscal transfer to the service-burdened central cities, or entails significant reduction in the employment or population growth potential of suburban areas.

In terms of electoral influences, suburban constituencies have become very powerful in the provincial legislature as the balance of population has shifted outside the core municipalities. This has created a cautious political atmosphere in which provincial governments have been reluctant to impose regional planning structures without first building a consensus among suburban constituents.

Where institutions for metropolitan-wide planning exist, i.e., in Vancouver and Toronto, growth management has been conducted through two main vehicles: urban structure planning supported by transportation planning, and growth allocation. The Toronto and Vancouver regions have undertaken some planning effort to create a hierarchy of metropolitan centres comprised of the core area and suburban sub-centres. In Montreal, this has been attempted by the Montreal Urban Community, the largest and most effective of the upper-tier governments, but not on a metropolitan-wide scale (perhaps reflecting the fact that decentralization is not considered as desirable in the Montreal region where the core is threatened with serious decline).

None of the three regions has managed to forge the necessary link between regional urban structure planning and transportation planning. In the Montreal region, there is no metropolitan-wide transit planning authority, nor is there one in the Toronto region. In Vancouver, a metropolitan transit authority only has advisory status to the provincial government. This makes for mixed record in term of the coordination of transit services and land use decisions on a metropolitan scale. On the one hand, major provincial investments in rapid transit have, in a general way, supported the urban structure concept in each region. On the other hand, highway development in all three regions has had the opposite effect, promoting an undifferentiated spread of the urban fabric.

The greatest threat to transit effectiveness and efficiency in the three regions are the land use decisions of suburban municipalities who continue to approve plans for low-density segregated development. On this score, the strongest link between transit goals and land use has been made in the Toronto region, where the Ontario government has attempted to influence municipal planning in favour of higher densities and mixed-use development.

All three metropolitan areas are now in the process of developing regional transportation plans, and all three are using a consultative provincial-municipal framework. Because

provinces are responsible for infrastructure development and the municipalities for land use planning, this holds the greatest promise for linking the two planning processes.

Regional population allocation has been the other main instrument of metropolitan planning. In both Vancouver and Toronto, the metropolitan planning agencies have attempted to direct population growth toward central cities and away from the suburban fringe. Our review of these efforts has suggested only moderate success in following through with growth management targets in official plans and in changing actual growth patterns. The main barrier to more effective management of population growth has been the lack of coordination of strategic decisions at the provincial level.

5.5 Municipal Planning Policies

The fact that planners often treat growth management and housing issues very differently emerged as an important theme in this study. In spite of the fact that these two policy fields are intimately related (e.g., housing development is the most important land use in terms of area and largely determines transportation needs), they are often separated in the planning discourse between the province and municipalities.

On the one hand, growth management is seen as a relatively legitimate intervention by the province. In BC and Quebec, the province intervenes through the activities of the respective agricultural land preservation agencies, which attempt to minimize the amount of valuable agricultural land used for suburban development. In Ontario, the province intervenes through its approval powers over municipal planning decisions. These provincial efforts encourage municipalities to consolidate development in already built-up areas, improve the efficiency of existing municipal services, and reduce the need to extend new services.

On the other hand, housing policies that require municipalities to ensure a wide range of housing types and an adequate social mix in their development decisions are seen as illegitimate incursions into the municipal sphere. In the Toronto region, the attempt by the province to influence housing development has resulted in widespread conflict between municipal and provincial governments. In the Vancouver and Montreal regions, provincial governments have been loath to attempt such intervention, preferring to consider housing as an area of municipal discretion.

One result of the different treatment afforded growth management and housing is that the provincial interest in providing a wide array of housing types at a variety of densities has been poorly expressed at the local level. Where municipalities in each of the study regions have undertaken housing intensification initiatives, they appear to be reacting to changing local economic, demographic and fiscal conditions rather than provincial policy pressures.

In the core cities, municipalities are highly motivated to reduce commuting into the core, to meet changing housing demand, to use existing infrastructure, and, in the case of Montreal, to stem population decline. In two of three cases (Vancouver and Montreal), the core city operates under special provincial charter that allows significant policy innovation.

Some standard principles are visible in core city intensification efforts. Most have sought to preserve existing neighborhoods as far as possible, direct growth to retail and high-transit capacity nodes and corridors, and create "new neighborhoods" in obsolete industrial and railway areas, and along waterfronts. All three core cities have been very active in encouraging the provision of social housing through municipal housing corporations and city-owned land. Adaptive reuse policies are in place or under consideration in each municipality, and small-scale infill is routinely permitted.

There are, however some differences. By adopting the neighbourhood centres idea in its recently approved official community plan, the City of Vancouver has forged ahead of Toronto and Montreal in promoting neighbourhood change. A similar policy would certainly be met with major opposition in Toronto and would not be seriously contemplated in Montreal where growth pressures are not as intense. Vancouver's success in this and other aspects of intensification policy may be partially attributable to its strong program of public participation in making the trade-offs between protecting neighbourhood character and promoting a functionally efficient regional system from which central city dwellers will benefit.

There are many common obstacles to intensification in the central cities. In particular, developers are sometimes dissuaded from undertaking residential projects in these areas because they feel that:

- there is little opportunity for economy of scale as infill projects are site-specific and the plans cannot usually be repeated for other sites
- the zoning and administrative procedures are more complicated and demanding
- local opposition to infill projects is likely to be greater in the central area than on the urban fringe
- it is difficult to assemble land in the central area and land prices are higher.

There is some evidence that obstacles arising from soil contamination on industrial sites are worse in the Toronto region than in Vancouver or Montreal. This is partially due to the severity of the contamination in Toronto and to the strictness of the provincial regulatory framework governing decommissioning of industrial sites. Intensification efforts encounter stronger resistance from heritage activists in Montreal than elsewhere, although this is a substantial force against redevelopment in all three central areas. In Vancouver, building heights are especially controversial because of the reduction in view they portend.

Suburban areas in the three study regions are adopting intensification policies in response to an aging population, fiscal constraints, market trends toward smaller housing units, concern to preserve environmental features, and the need to control the gradual market-led urbanization of some parts of the suburban landscape.

Intensification policies in the suburban areas of the three regions are more haphazard and difficult to classify. Some suburban municipalities are strongly resistant to changing the built

form, while others are more enthusiastic about the prospect of intensification. Many suburban municipalities in all three regions have adopted policies to promote arterial intensification, smaller-lot greenfield development, secondary suites, and infill development within neighbourhoods. In the Vancouver region, suburban municipalities are also promoting town centre development around a number of major nodes with high-order transit facilities. So are some suburban municipalities in Toronto and the more mature suburbs in Montreal.

The main obstacles to intensification in suburban areas of the three study regions are the widely shared antipathy toward higher-density urban-style development, the desire to limit the amount of affordable housing in the community, the ready availability of greenfield sites for new development, the political influence of development interests, the lack of consensus among municipal officials and planners on the undesirability of low-density development, the reluctance of professionals involved in urban design (e.g., transportation and public works engineers) to adopt new, more compact standards, and what appears to be a locked-in dependence on the private automobile for suburban travel.

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