

Democracy, Governance, and Metro Vancouver: Decision-Making and the Regional Growth Strategy

by

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B.A, University of Northern BC, 2003

Research Project Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Urban Studies

in the
Urban Studies Program
Faculty of Arts and Social Science

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SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

Fall 2014

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Abstract

Democracy at the scale of the city-region is obfuscated by multiple levels of government, lateral relationships between private and public actors, and decision-making that combines governance together with government. At this scale lines of accountability and decision-making are blurred. However, “new regionalism” combines *government* together with *governance* as a possible approach for cooperation and decision-making at the scale of the metropolitan region. This study reviews the extent to which the City of Burnaby and civil society organizations (CSOs) across Metro Vancouver influenced and shaped the Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) ratified in 2011. The literature regarding “new regionalism” highlights two important features: 1) the possibility of including non-government organizations and/or private actors in decision-making and 2) consensus-based, collaborative, decision-making. An interpretive analysis reveals that both the City of Burnaby and civil society organizations were consulted and able to influence the Regional Growth Strategy. The multiple avenues available to local authorities to review the plan, including written submissions and participation on Metro Vancouver’s Technical Advisory Committee, enabled them to collaborate and deliberate with one another. Although they were consulted, CSOs were not empowered to collaborate with one another, or with local authorities as part of the process. Factors which limited the involvement of CSOs, and inhibited the exploration of alternative normative goals for the RGS, include Metro Vancouver’s institutional focus on consensus between member local authorities, the historical focus on sustainability in regional planning, and the more regulatory approach that was applied in the case of the RGS.

- **Keywords:** Metropolitan governance; new regionalism; democracy; deliberative democracy

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my wife Julie - for telling me to go for it.

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List of Acronyms

BCBC	Business Council of British Columbia
CSO	Civil Society Organization
GVRD	Greater Vancouver Regional District (also known as Metro Vancouver)
GVTA	Greater Vancouver Transportation Authority
NAIOP	National Association of Office and Industrial Properties
OCP	Official Community Plan
RGS	Regional Growth Strategy
RCS	Regional Context Statement
TAC	Technical Advisory Committee
UBCM	Union of British Columbia Municipalities
UDI	Urban Development Institute

Chapter 1.

Introduction

This study is intended to ascertain to what extent the City of Burnaby and civil society organizations (CSOs) across Metro Vancouver influenced and shaped the Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) ratified in 2011. The literature regarding “new regionalism” highlights two important features: 1) the possibility of including non-government organizations and/or private actors in decision-making and 2) consensus-based, collaborative, decision-making. Did the process to create the RGS demonstrate the consensual, collaborative elements of new regionalism, between multiple agents and actors?

By evaluating the degree to which Metro Vancouver was able to empower localities and CSOs to influence the RGS, this study will explore the extent to which a formal institution such as Metro Vancouver can achieve collaboration and deliberation on a regional scale. The increasing metropolitanization taking place around the world, and the nature of the world economy, makes metropolitan regions, or city-regions, an increasingly important scale to address a range of issues such as service delivery, infrastructure, economic development, and long-range land-use planning. Many municipalities and city regions are aspiring to compete on a regional basis in an increasingly global economy. Mark Tranel (2009) notes that local entities must band together to respond to “...issues ranging from the global economic reality of competition for knowledge workers to such disaggregate everyday life issues as who picks up the

trash.” (p. 3) Mark Rosentraub and Wasim al-Habil (2009) note that “Over less than a hundred years, challenges and development patterns that were largely contained within the boundaries of individual cities now routinely span across cities...”(p. 49).

One particular problem at the metropolitan scale pertains to decision-making and democratic legitimacy. Navdeep Mathur and Chris Skelcher (2007) note that, at the regional scale, there is now widespread acceptance that the conventional institutions of representative democracy have “...been supplemented by systems of governance that are constituted with an emphasis on lateral relationships between networks of public, private, and civil society actors.” (p. 228). City councils are one player amongst many, as opposed to being the sole decision-maker over a range of issues. As highlighted by Mark Tranel (2009), at this scale traditional values of democratic access conflict with the need to respond to competition between metropolitan areas, both locally and globally. In a paper on democratic urban governance, Oliver Dlabac (2013) emphasizes that political processes at the urban scale are distinct from national systems. He thereby suggests that the application of existing democratic measures to the local level should be avoided, and instead proposes a layered framework to evaluate urban governance. For Dlabac, the metropolitan “layer” is distinct, and has unique features from the standpoint of democratic urban governance.

The current study is intended as a detailed outline of what decision-making, and governance, looks like at the metropolitan scale from the standpoint of democracy. The Regional District model of governance in British Columbia (BC) has been touted by some scholars (eg., Sancton, 1994, Bish and Clemens, 2008) as a successful means of dealing with issues that spill-over beyond the borders of individual cities and across

wider regions. The largest Regional District in BC, by population, is Metro Vancouver¹. Patrick Smith and Kennedy Stewart (2009) note the long-standing BC tradition of ‘gentle imposition’, whereby the province waits for local or regional consensus before proceeding with legislative reform. In the case of the Greater Vancouver Regional District (GVRD), they note that the province created regional districts in response to clearly expressed local wishes (Smith and Stewart, 2009, p. 303). The Metro Vancouver model thereby evolved incrementally over time.

Metro Vancouver endeavours to: 1) Deliver Core Services, 2) Plan for the Future and, 3) Act as a Regional Forum². Although Metro Vancouver exerts some discretion over a range of services and plans, the organization has many features that reinforce the authority and autonomy of the member municipalities. In this context, this study will examine the third aspiration above; the degree to which Metro Vancouver was able to act as a regional forum in the case of the RGS. The history of planning in the region exhibits a governance approach based on extensive consultation and consensus-based decision-making. Negotiation, partnership, and voluntary participation are all highly valued components of metropolitan governance from the standpoint of new regionalism. In the case of the RGS, were local authorities empowered to deliberate and collaborate with one another?

¹ Metro Vancouver encompasses four corporate entities: the Greater Vancouver Regional District, Greater Vancouver Water District, Greater Vancouver Sewerage and Drainage District, and the Metro Vancouver Housing Corporation.

² Metro Vancouver, About us, Web (accessed February 2014):
<http://www.metrovancouver.org/about/Pages/default.aspx>

Prior to 2014, the third role was as follows: “Act as a regional forum for the 22 municipalities, the electoral area and the treaty First Nation that comprise its membership”. (Metro Vancouver, Action Plan 2013, Burnaby BC, 10.)
<http://www.metrovancouver.org/about/publications/Publications/ActionPlan2013.pdf>

Oliver Dlabac's (2013) paper outlines two distinct criteria to democratic urban governance at the metropolitan scale: 1) advocacy of affected localities and 2) capacity for collective action. A study of the RGS serves as an opportunity to explore both of these criteria in detail, and describe what they look like in practice. In 2006, the Board of the Greater Vancouver Regional District initiated the preparation of the Regional Growth Strategy pursuant to the *Local Government Act* (Metro Vancouver, 2013). From 2006-2010, Metro Vancouver undertook a comprehensive effort to consult and engage with members of the public, civic associations from throughout the region, and member local authorities to create a new long-term growth management strategy. The Strategy was accepted by all 24 local government authorities in the region, and adopted by the GVRD board on July 29, 2011.

This study will outline the degree to which a particular municipality, the City of Burnaby, was able to advocate effectively for local concerns in the RGS, and the degree to which civil society organizations from throughout the region were able to influence the decision-making that took place. In the literature pertaining to metropolitan governance, the capacity for collaboration and deliberation between local authorities, as well as civic organizations, is an important dimension to dealing with metropolitan challenges in a way that accommodates the political reality in city-regions. Further, the academic literature regarding the 'new regionalism' approach to metropolitan governance highlights two important features; 1) the possibility of including non-government organizations and/or private actors in regional decision-making, and 2) consensus-based, collaborative, decision-making.

This dimension to decision-making in the case of the RGS will be examined. For this research paper a scale of influence and participation was established using criteria

from a study of new regionalism by Kubler and Schwab in 2007, and a matrix created by Stewart in 2007 of decision-making participation. “Empowered to deliberate and collaborate” is at the higher end of the scale, and “informed” is at the lower end of the scale. The intent here is to reveal whether the process to create the RGS empowered local authorities in the region and CSOs with an authentic opportunity to influence a regional decision, and whether the decision-making demonstrated the collaborative decision-making envisioned in the new regionalism approach to metropolitan governance. A document review, combined with interviews, was carried out to provide an overall account of the degree of influence and participation experienced by: 1) the City of Burnaby, and 2) civil society organizations in the creation of the RGS. The essential features of Metro Vancouver that facilitated collaborative and deliberative decision-making will be highlighted, as well as the features that inhibited the possibilities for democratic cooperation between local authorities and CSOs envisioned under new regionalism.

The central question is whether the best features of the new regionalist approach to metropolitan governance are manifested through the existence, and regional planning approach, of the formal Metro Vancouver government institution. More specifically, in the case of the RGS, did Metro Vancouver fulfill its third role to “act as a regional forum”? The conclusion confirms the importance of collaboration and horizontal decision-making for regional cooperation in Metro Vancouver, and makes recommendations for ensuring Metro Vancouver’s past success using a governance model grounded in consensus building continues in the future, and can expand beyond local municipalities.

Chapter 2. Literature Review

Governance, then, cannot be avoided and could very well become the dominant paradigm in the twenty first century
(Savitch and Vogel, 2000, p. 161)

We need better forums for collaboration around metropolitan issues....
(Mazer, 2013, p. 70)

This study examines a specific dimension to democratic decision-making at the metropolitan scale; the capacity for influence and deliberation amongst local authorities and civil society organizations. An assessment of decision-making regarding the creation of the Regional Growth Strategy will help to understand the challenges, concerns and possibilities for enabling local governments and civic organizations to collaborate with one another and influence regional decisions through an institution such as Metro Vancouver. To understand why this is the case, this literature review will outline three themes in the scholarly literature. The first section introduces three approaches to metropolitan governance, and identifies the importance of collaborative and deliberative decision-making in the 'new regionalism' approach to metropolitan governance. The second section describes the features of Metro Vancouver, and the Regional District model of government in British Columbia, that are commensurate with the 'new regionalism' approach. These features make Metro Vancouver an ideal case study for assessing this approach. The last section outlines criteria that can be used to assess 'new regionalism', the case of Metro Vancouver, and why an interpretive analysis is necessary to do so.

2.1. Metropolitan Governance and ‘New Regionalism’

The Canadian political landscape and institutional framework is ill-equipped to deal with the governance of urban agglomerations, or metropolitan regions. In Canada, the formal government framework within which urban cities find themselves dates back to the constitutional order of the 1860s when most of the Canadian population resided in rural areas (Smith and Oberlander, 2006, p. 147). This framework contrasts with the increasingly urban Canadian economy and population today. David Siegel (2009) notes that although municipalities were traditionally seen as vehicles for “decentralized provincial service delivery” in Ontario, global city-regions are increasingly recognized as the drivers of economic development (p. 21). These challenges are not unique to Canada. Hank Savitch and Ronald Vogel (2000) note that: “The spread of the central city population into the suburbs has not only changed the physical landscape, but revolutionized local politics...” and further, that as people move beyond consolidated boundaries: “...higher or new forms of government have been brought to bear on the situation.” (p. 160)

A variety of different arrangements and institutions have cropped up around the world to try and effectively manage city-regions. Metro Vancouver is a unique model as a hybrid between a formal institution and an approach grounded in governance through consensus and collaboration. Among academics, there is no consensus on how the public sector should be organized at this level (Tranel, 2009). The result is a very wide range of academic discourse pertaining to metropolitan governance over issues such as social equity, managerial effectiveness, planning capacity, competitiveness, and regional coordination. Ann Golden and Enid Slack (2006) note that in a world characterized by competitive technological development, global flows of goods and information, and the

concentration of specialized firms, regions will increasingly need to address the following five “building blocks to global competitiveness”: 1) service funding and delivery, 2) capacity to plan, 3) investment and infrastructure, 4) access and participation, and 5) a coordinated approach to economic development (p. 34-35). In a review of five books written in the 1990s on the subject of metropolitan governance, Allan Wallis (1998) describes economic competitiveness, social equity, environmental protection, and the provision of infrastructure and services as justification for the increasing interest in regionalism (p. 98). Wallis’ review is entitled *Filling the Governance Gap* (1998) – a reference to a perceived lack of governance capacity to address regional problems throughout North America and Europe.

Although much literature is devoted to the economic imperatives underpinning efforts to coordinate on a regional basis, Jonas and Pincetl (2006) highlight that it is not always the need to create functional global economic regions that justifies an increased interest in governance at the regional scale. Their study suggests that “...claims about the resurgence of political regionalism as representing a common response to globalization and the nation-state ‘hollowing-out’ are over-generalized” (Jonas and Pincetl, 2006, p. 487). These findings are reinforced in the concluding chapter to an edited volume by H.V. Savitch and Ronald Vogel (1996), where they conclude that “Regionalism Addresses Different Problems in Different Regions” (p. 294). The chapter provides a laundry list of different, *local*, imperatives for pursuing regional solutions in a range of American cities from Louisville to Portland, including declining fiscal bases, deindustrialization, rural governments being overwhelmed by rapid growth, corrupt political machines, regional planning challenges, and fiscal equalization (Savitch and Vogel, 1996, p. 294-295). The research paper by Jonas and Pincetl is an empirical

examination of regionalism in California, which they describe as a "...long term social movement...rather than a short-term response to wider pressures of globalization...(2006, p. 489).

Regional governance efforts in California are thus understood as a response to conflicts that are more local in nature, and that have been put in place incrementally over a long period of time. The study by Jonas and Pincetl, and findings from Savitch and Vogel, illustrate the diverse range of challenges that necessitate governance solutions that are regional in scope. These studies highlight the importance of local politics as well as political access, participation, social equity and environmental protection in catalyzing governance efforts at the regional scale. They also highlight the reality that regional governance, by its nature, does not have clearly defined constituencies and has an incredibly diverse array of prospective stakeholders. Savitch and Vogel (1996) put this in stark terms, expressing the notion that "...although regions theoretically may encompass an optimal scope for issue management..." they lack both the political clout and a loyal and dedicated constituent base (p. 295).

In the same manner that Jonas and Pincetl provide an empirical examination of these dimensions in the case of California (2006), this research study is intended as an empirical examination of regional governance in the case of Metro Vancouver. However, the focus here pertains to decision-making practices and mechanisms, as opposed to the imperatives and history of governance approaches that are outlined in Jonas and Pincetl's work. Responses in the literature to the imperatives highlighted by Golden, Slack, Jonas, Pincetl, Savitch, and Vogel are diverse. Regional governance has taken many different forms including consolidation, separate tiers of government, or special purpose boards. No two metropolitan regions are governed in the same way. Michael

Storper (2013) notes that "...all major metropolitan areas are governed by a complex mish-mash of municipalities, counties, *departements*, special authorities, districts, and agencies" (p. 3). Savitch and Vogel (2006) conceptualize this range of metropolitan governance arrangements into the following three categories: 1) progressive regionalism, 2) polycentric regionalism, and 3) new regionalism. *Progressive regionalism* refers to the establishment of central or consolidated tiers of regional government institutions. *Polycentric regionalism* is the absence of any regional tier of government, and *new regionalism* refers to regional agreements or assemblies which provide a forum or assembly for existing levels of local government to collaborate and cooperate with one another (p. 221-223). Metro Vancouver can be conceptualized under the latter category.

Kubler and Schwab (2007) have three similar categorical concepts: 1) metropolitan reform tradition, 2) public choice perspective and 3) new regionalism (p. 473-474), with similar descriptions. The metropolitan reform tradition requires local governments to cede authority to a centralized, or consolidated, level of government, while the public choice perspective retains all autonomy and decision-making power at the level of the local municipality. New regionalism has elements of both; it typically includes some mechanism or forum whereby localities can engage in coordination and administration on a regional scale while retaining the autonomy and authority of local governments.

For Kubler and Heinelt (2002), the 'new regionalism' approach is a much more realistic description of what regional governance looks like today, and better captures the range of functional arrangements at the regional scale. On a global scale, they note that consolidated metropolitan governments are extremely rare, as are situations where

localities are entirely autonomous (p. 8). Much more commonly, metropolitan governance is "...constructed through the relations between policy relevant actors within incrementally-assembled, issue-based co-operational arrangements" (Kubler and Heinelt 2002, p. 9). They cite Benz, Scharpf and Zintl (1992) who conceptualise these schemes as *joint decision systems* in which co-ordinated action is mainly based on negotiated agreements (as cited in Kubler and Heinelt, 2002, p. 10). Allan Wallis (1994) stresses that this 'third wave' of regionalism emphasizes collaboration and process versus structure, whereby the focus is on the development of a regional vision and goals, and the formation of consensus among stakeholders. In their paper *Paths to New Regionalism* Savitch and Vogel (2000) emphasize that governance "...conveys the notion that existing institutions can be harnessed in new ways, that cooperation can be carried out on a fluid and voluntary basis among localities, and that people can best regulate themselves through horizontally linked organizations." (p. 161).

2.1.1. Possibilities of New Regionalism

This research study is focused on the implications of the 'new regionalism' approach for decision-making at the regional scale. The academic literature regarding 'new regionalism' highlights two important features; 1) the possibility of including non-government organizations and/or private actors in regional decision-making, and 2) consensus-based, collaborative, decision-making.

Governance schemes at the metropolitan scale can include "...not only state agencies, but also varieties of nongovernment organisations and associations..." (Kubler and Schwab, 2007, p. 477). Because a plurality of actors can influence governance at the regional scale, Kubler and Schwab (2007) propose that there are new and

empowering opportunities for citizens, governments and organizations, and decisions must be made through compromise and deliberation. In an article on local and regional governance Savitch and Vogel (2006, p. 235) quote Clarence Stone who defines governance as “informal arrangements by which public bodies and private interests function together in order to be able to make and carry out governing decisions” (Stone, 1989, p. 6). And in an introduction to a symposium on Metropolitanization and Metropolitan Governance, Daniel Kubler (2012) suggests that the strengthening of metropolitan *governance* capacity (vs. *government*) results in a move away from majoritarian patterns of decision-making towards more *democratic, consensual processes* (Kubler, 2012, p. 406-407).

This dimension to the new regionalist approach is also reflected in studies looking to conceptualize regions from an economic or developmental standpoint. In an article entitled “New Regionalism Reconsidered: Globalization and the Remaking of Political Economic Space” Gordon MacLeod (2001) suggests that a framework developed by Jessop, which he calls ‘institutional-relational’ may be useful in theorizing the “...superimpositions and interdependencies of territory and social form” in urban regions (p. 815). MacLeod cites six interacting dimensions from Jessop’s framework, the first of which is the *representational regime*, described as the “...functional agents, political parties, state bureaucrats, business and labour representatives, community groups, quasi state development agencies and, more conceptually, the urban and regional regimes and coalitions” that influence “state practices” (Jessop, 1990; MacLeod, 2001, p. 816). This wide range of agents, and the interdependencies among them, is in part responsible for the resurging interest in urban regions according to authors such as MacLeod and Wallis. Cooperation and partnerships between this range of actors is an

important element from the perspective of the polycentric or the new regionalist approach. Theoretically, new regionalism should combine “interlocal cooperation with a new incarnation of existing governments...and portend new policies for working with private enterprise to leverage local economic and political clout” (Savitch and Vogel, 2006, p. 224).

These features also apply in cases where social imperatives, such as inclusiveness and equity, and environmental concerns have instigated approaches to regional governance under the new regionalism paradigm. Jonas and Pincetl’s (2006) study of California cites a definition for new regionalism from the California Center for Regional Leadership with the following distinct elements: 1) it brings together public, private and non-profit sectors in new ways, 2) it is self-organizing and self-defining, 3) it draws citizens into broad regional dialogues and 4) it measures progress and sets priorities for action (as cited in Jonas and Pincetl, 2006, p. 497). Nick Bollman, who “...developed a program for fostering new regionalism in California...”, noted that a recurring theme in new regionalism is that government cannot be left to solve problems independently, and there needs to be shared identification and responsibility of problems for addressing them in a coordinated way (as cited in Jonas and Pincetl, 2006, p. 496-497). The coordination to which he is referring is across civil society, between government, private, and non-profit sectors.

In the first chapter of their edited volume, Bradford and Bramwell emphasize that while “Cities are globalization’s crucial scale of economic and social interaction”, they require “...robust governance capacity...” to reach their potential for innovation and inclusion (2014, p. 4). More specifically, city regions must be able to bring together different sectors and levels of government, and must shift focus from formal structures to

collaboration in order to address challenges that are beyond the scope of any single actor or organization (Bradford and Bramwell, 2014). The title of the chapter is “Innovation and Inclusion in Canadian City-Regions” and makes the salient point that economic prosperity and social inclusion are interdependent, cannot be pursued independently, and that “...socially oriented development ideas...” depend on their institutionalization in governing arrangements (p. 13). Further, that governance does not entail the absence of government, but that government’s role changes from “...provider of solutions to enabler or partner in problem-solving” (Bradford and Bramwell, 2014, p. 14).

For Bradford and Bramwell (2014), dealing with social inclusion as well as economic development merits new approaches to governance at the scale of the city-region, noting that “...governance through partnership and collaboration is widely seen as crucial in bolstering a city’s strategic capacity for economic and social development.” (p. 14). In a study on new regionalism in five Swiss metropolitan areas, Brigitte Schwab and Daniel Kubler (2007) argue that metropolitan governance nowadays is achieved through complex networks of linked functions (p. 477). The authors quote D.F. Norris (2001b) who defines ‘metropolitan governance’ as “The association of governments or residents in a defined geographic area for the purpose of controlling or regulating the behavior within and performing functions or providing services for the overall territory.” (p. 535). The important point to note is that, at the metropolitan scale, governance is shaped by a plurality of *governments*. From the standpoint of democratic decision-making, the literature outlined above emphasizes the possibility that the ‘new regionalism’ approach can potentially enable collaborative, consensus-based decision-making, and the prospect that non-governmental actors can participate in regional

decision-making. However, Metro Vancouver is a formal *government* institution. As such, whether or not Metro Vancouver has retained the consensual, collaborative elements of new regionalism, between multiple agents and actors, is a central part of the current research.

Stone, Kubler, Savitch and Vogel all emphasize the value of informal governance arrangements as a means of including civil society actors in governing city-regions. In their outline of governance in the San Francisco Bay Area, Rothblatt and Jones (1998) note that whatever the future brings in terms of local *government* in the region, the "...metropolis will continue to be governed by political and administrative actions of private, governmental, and public/private organizations in an inter-organizational ecology" (p. 428). The Metro Vancouver government organization, in addition to service delivery, aspires to "Act as a Regional Forum"³. When it comes to regional planning, Metro Vancouver relies on consensus based decision-making. Do these features enable collaborative decision-making, and non-government actors to participate in decision-making at the regional scale in the manner envisioned by proponents of new regionalism? In his book review Allan Wallis (1998) describes the range of regional governance approaches from top-down structural remedies to "...bottom up compliance with regional plans" (p. 98). Was the process to create the RGS, ratified in 2011, a case of "bottom-up compliance" exhibiting voluntary cooperation between localities, and the horizontal linkages between organizations as espoused by Savitch and Vogel (2000, p. 161)? Or have the best features of the new regionalist approach to metropolitan

³ Metro Vancouver, About us, Web (accessed February 2014):
<http://www.metrovancouver.org/about/Pages/default.aspx>

governance disappeared because of the existence of the formal Metro Vancouver government institution?

The RGS, ratified in 2011 by all of the member authorities, is a specific undertaking by Metro Vancouver to come up with a framework for land use planning through consensus. Further, the process to create the RGS included extensive outreach and involvement from civic groups across the region. Did the process to create the RGS enable collaborative decision-making? Were municipalities and civic groups included as “horizontally liked” (ie, non-hierarchical) collaborators, and enabled to deliberate as partners in a regional forum as envisaged by proponents of the new regionalist approach?

Much of the collaborative decision-making identified in the literature above is across informal networks between localities and/or civic groups, without a formal government institution. However, Savitch and Vogel (2006) make the salient point that accomplishing regional objectives may require restructuring relations and institutions at the metropolitan scale, and that governance does not necessarily imply an absence of government (p. 241). They further note that new regionalism has yet to develop institutions in the United States. In this context, the opportunity to examine an institution such as Metro Vancouver will offer important lessons, and will contribute to a broader discussion of the merits of the institutional approach to new regionalism. However, before proceeding, it is first necessary to clarify whether, and to what extent, Metro Vancouver can be considered under the ‘new regionalism’ approach to metropolitan governance.

2.2. Metro Vancouver and the Regional District model of governance in British Columbia

British Columbia was divided into 29 regional districts in 1965. The Greater Vancouver Regional District (GVRD) was incorporated as the Regional District of Fraser-Burrard in 1967, and renamed Metro Vancouver in 2007 (Bish and Clemens, 2008, p. 49). Robert Bish and Eric Clemens (2008) contend that regional districts perform a dual role: one is to undertake functions mandated by the province, the other is to perform voluntary functions decided upon by local governments (p. 49). Patrick Smith (2009) highlights the flexibility that this model has allowed, noting that limited mandated functions, together with significant *voluntary* functions, has resulted in consensual decision-making at the local/regional level (p. 244-245).

Metro Vancouver comprises four separate legal entities⁴ – the Greater Vancouver Sewerage and Drainage District (GVS&DD), Greater Vancouver Water District (GVWD), the Metro Vancouver Housing Corporation (MVHC) and the Greater Vancouver Board itself (GVRD) (Metro Vancouver, *About Us*, n.d., para. 3). Artibise, Cameron, and Seel (2004) note that the role of Metro Vancouver is to deliver services that are regional, rather than local, in nature, and there is an emphasis on the balance between joint efforts and local autonomy (p. 201). In terms of the mandated functions mentioned above, Bish and Clemens (2008) contend that these are relatively few and include the creation of plans for managing solid waste, liquid waste, and emergency planning for rural areas. Walisser, Paget and Dann (2013) note that the legislation creating Regional Districts relied on local choice, with a system that required that there

⁴ Two of these entities, the GVS&DD and GVWD, predate the GVRD and helped establish the value of a regional approach to policy challenges in BC (Tennant, 1973).

be “...little in the way of mandated service responsibilities.” (p. 146). They note further that each Regional District in BC has developed distinct services based on each region’s unique characteristics and needs (Walisser, Paget and Dann, 2013).

When it comes to regional planning, however, the governance framework is not as clearly delineated. Regional planning was a mandate of regional districts from 1965 until being abolished in 1983. Twelve years later, in 1995, legislation for regional growth strategies was strengthened under the *Local Government Act*, but requires the establishment of consensus among the various municipalities and electoral areas (Bish and Clemens, 2008). The legislation pertaining to Regional Growth Strategies encourages voluntary participation of all affected governments in their preparation, and acceptance by all affected local governments before they can be adopted (Bish and Clemens, 2008). Thus, although there is some degree of regional authority over land-use planning, the framework retains a high degree of local autonomy. Because the Board consists of representatives from existing municipal councils, rather than separately, or directly elected representatives, the consensual model of decision-making is reinforced for all the boards and committees.

In their book *City Making in Paradise: Nine Decisions that Saved Vancouver*, Cameron, Harcourt and Rossiter (2007) quote Richard Taylor, the former Executive Director of the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM). His statement captures the oscillating tension in the region when it comes to land-use planning, and espouses the view that the GVRD was never meant as part of a hierarchy of government:⁵

⁵ Municipal Affairs Minister Don Campbell also confirmed this in the 1960s, stating that regional districts were not conceived as a fourth level of government (Smith 2006).

Under the legislation the GVRD inherited from the Lower Mainland Regional Planning Board, local bylaws had to conform to the official regional plan. Ultimately, that was unacceptable. While there's some of that in the Regional Growth Strategies, it was based on a model where you encouraged co-operation, with consensus and conformity through negotiation and mediation. (p. 178)

For these reasons, the regional district model of governance, and Metro Vancouver, can be understood to fall within the 'new regionalism' approach to metropolitan governance described above. Andrew Sancton (2009) underscores this point when he states that regional districts were to act as an institution through which increased inter-municipal cooperation could be encouraged and, in their creation, the provincial government was anxious to emphasize that "...a new level of government was not being created." (p. 226). Walisser et al (2013) state that the first role of Regional Districts is to "...provide a region-wide forum for members to discuss issues..." (p. 147). As a mechanism to foster voluntary collaboration, to allow existing local governments to cooperate, and yet retain a majority of autonomy and authority at the local level, Metro Vancouver falls into the 'new regionalism' category of metropolitan governance outlined above.

Savitch and Vogel (2006) describe new regionalism further as a combination of *government* with *governance*, formal and informal cooperation, and centralization together with decentralization (p. 225). They suggest this approach is promising as a means to contend with the many challenges to metropolitan regions. However, there is a question as to the effectiveness of this model in an increasingly metropolitan world. Patrick Smith and Peter Oberlander (2006) note that Metro Vancouver may be facing an "accountability crunch" in that the region may not have sufficient political authority or legitimacy to deal with an increasing number of problems that are regional in nature

(p.155). This “accountability crunch” is related to issues of access and participation at the metropolitan scale highlighted previously by Anne Golden and Enid Slack. For Smith and Oberlander (2006), this accountability crunch has come to challenge regional district “efficiency arguments and claims” and that a “new, more politically accountable Greater Vancouver Authority” may be necessary (p. 155).

Rosentraub and Al-Habil (2009), on the other hand, oppose this view, noting that: “...consolidation could work against the interests of citizenship by failing to provide residents with a sense of local control...” (p. 49). Andrew Sancton (2005) contests the need for further consolidation, stating that “...it is hard to imagine a mechanism that could better combine local self-government through established municipalities with the existence of an institution at the metropolitan level...” (p. 325). These differing opinions require an assessment of Metro Vancouver from the perspective of the constituent members of the organization. Smith and Oberlander (2006) articulate the need for this type of examination as follows:

...solutions to the problems of a now highly urbanized world will not occur without a reconceptualization of the future network of metropolises based on an assessment of some of the governance forms which have worked, those which have failed, and those which need to be tried. (p.153)

The need for this type of assessment is found elsewhere in the literature on metropolitan governance. Christian Lefevre (1998) notes that proponents of public choice⁶ have criticized political and democratic arguments for a metropolitan model, or tier of government, because these arguments have not been verified empirically (p. 10).

⁶ Refer to the public choice perspective outlined above. The public choice model is supported by an article written in 1956 by Charles Tiebout, whereby competition between fragmented political units provides the “voter-consumer” additional democratic choice when it comes to selecting a community of residence. (Tiebout, 1956).

Donald Norris (2001a) writes that regional governance arrangements that require local governments to cede authority is a direct threat to local autonomy, which he defines as the ability of governments to regulate activities broadly within their territories (p. 566). On the other hand, there are arguments that large structures are more democratic because they offer fewer opportunities for a small group to take control, and because voter participation increases in relation to the power of local government (Lefevre, 1998).

Writing in 2006, Savitch and Vogel note that: "...new regionalism is still young and there are no firm examples of its institutional basis in the United States, although Portland and Vancouver in the case of Canada have adopted some of its features." (p. 222). The Metro Vancouver governance model is unique in Canada (Smith, 2009; Smith and Oberlander, 2006) and offers a good case study of a 'new regionalist' institution. The discrepancy between the views of academics such as Smith and Oberlander, Rosentraub and Al-Habil, and the considerable optimism expressed by Sancton, Savitch, Vogel, Kubler and Schwab for new regionalism, merits further study in order to unveil the attributes of this model from the standpoint of collaboration and cooperation. Savitch and Vogel (2006) state that:

Cities and city regions are experimenting in how to govern a sprawling metropolitan region and develop collaborative relationships with other governments in the area, state, and nation alongside local and international private and non-profit organizations. The challenge is to ensure that traditional concerns about efficiency, effectiveness, equity, and democracy are not lost in building new regionalism. (p. 241)

This study is focused specifically on the democratic concern raised above. An assessment of Metro Vancouver will highlight the strengths and weaknesses of this model, and a formal institution, from the standpoint of collaboration and deliberation. Specifically, the extent to which this particular 'new regionalism' approach to

metropolitan governance retains the dual role of enabling the ongoing autonomy of the localities, and providing some measure of collaboration on a regional scale. Metro Vancouver is unique as an institution, and as a new regionalist approach. Andrew Sancton (2001) further highlights the importance of a study of this kind, stating that:

The fact that the GVRD⁷ rests somewhere between the old and the new regionalism is just one of many reasons why it merits more attention from both Americans and Canadians who are concerned with the effective governance of our city-regions (p. 554).

Section 2.3 will review the parameters for an examination of Metro Vancouver, and the specific case of the Regional Growth Strategy.

2.3. Assessing New Regionalism and Metro Vancouver

Navdeep Mathur and Chris Skelcher (2007) note that “Criteria-based assessment methods involve the specification and operationalization of a priori principles of democracy into criteria against which national governmental systems can be benchmarked.” (p. 231). However, these type of assessments assume a “rigid constitutional framework” which is problematic when it comes to network governance (Mathur and Skelcher, 2007, p. 230) (described as ‘aconstitutional’ because it is not legally ‘constituted’ in the same way as other territorial polities). For this reason, this study will not look to ‘benchmark’ the case of Metro Vancouver, but uncover whether the effort to create the RGS empowered the localities and CSOs in the region with an authentic opportunity to influence a regional decision, and whether the decision-making approached the kind of joint-decision making and collaboration outlined above. This research study will thereby proceed with an interpretive analysis, by combining

⁷ GVRD – Greater Vancouver Regional District, the former name of Metro Vancouver.

documentary analysis with interviews to develop an “in-depth account of the governance context” (Mathur and Skelcher, 2007, p. 230) in the case of the RGS.

As mentioned previously, Metro Vancouver is unique as a regional entity, and thereby has unique goals from the standpoint of governance. In 2014, Metro Vancouver endeavoured to: 1) Deliver Core Services, 2) Plan for the Future and, 3) Act as a Regional Forum⁸. In 2014 Metro Vancouver further defined the third role as follows: “Serve as the main political forum for discussion of significant community issues at the regional levels.”⁹

This study is focused on the third role - acting as a regional forum – because this role and objective aligns with the governance characteristics of new regionalism outlined above. Kubler and Schwab’s (2007) study provides a useful framework with which to examine this dimension to regional governance. Their examination of new regionalism in Switzerland outlines an ‘optimistic hypothesis’ whereby a plurality of actors can influence governance at the regional scale, resulting in new and empowering opportunities for citizens, governments and organizations. Kubler and Schwab’s ‘optimistic hypothesis’ raises the possibility that metropolitan governance frameworks offers civic or nongovernmental agencies the opportunity to participate in decision-making at the regional scale, and that decision-making can take place through compromise and deliberation. This hypothesis aligns very well with Metro Vancouver’s aspiration to act as a regional forum, and possibilities envisaged in the new regionalism approach to governance.

⁸ Metro Vancouver, About us, Web (accessed February 2014):
<http://www.metrovancouver.org/about/Pages/default.aspx>

⁹ Metro Vancouver, About Us (Web): <http://www.metrovancouver.org/about/Pages/default.aspx>

Oliver Dlabac's (2013) study "Assessing Democratic Urban Governance: Towards a Comparative Framework" proposes: 1) the advocacy of affected localities and, 2) the capacity for collective action as two critical dimensions shaping the quality of democracy at the metropolitan scale (p. 19). Dlabac suggests that existing localities must be able to advocate effectively at the metropolitan scale, and there must be some mechanism to undertake 'collective action'. Kubler and Schwab's optimistic hypothesis, and Dlabac's two dimensions to democracy at the scale of the city-region, provide a useful starting place to examine the degree to which Metro Vancouver provides a regional forum from the perspective of new regionalism. The RGS ratified by Metro Vancouver in 2011 is an explicit case of 'collective action' in an urban region. Because the RGS was ratified, there is clearly some 'capacity for collective action' in the region (notwithstanding how *effective* the strategy may or may not be). Furthermore, the process to create the RGS included a plurality of actors, including both CSOs and local authorities (Appendix A). According to these criteria, Metro Vancouver is a very good case study.

In their study of five Swiss metropolitan areas, Kubler and Schwab (2007) test the optimistic hypothesis outlined above by comparing the respective regions across two variables: 1) mode of decision-making and 2) inclusiveness of civil society actors. In terms of decision-making and the RGS, Metro Vancouver operates through majority votes (Bish and Clemens, 2008, p. 58)¹⁰. However, the process in creating the RGS involved extensive consultation and collaboration over 5 years. Did the extensive

¹⁰ It is important to note that voting on the respective Metro Vancouver Boards is, however, weighted by population. The number of votes per director is based on 1 vote for every 20,000 people. (Metro Vancouver: Board Members (n.d.). <http://www.metrovancouver.org/boards/Pages/directors.aspx>)

consultation undertaken by Metro Vancouver go beyond 'majority voting' and enable compromise, negotiation and/or deliberation between the member municipalities? This dimension to the 'new regionalism' approach to governance is important. Kubler (2012) notes that 'new regionalism' emphasises the importance of voluntary cooperation and joint-decision systems (405). Christian Lefevre (1998) further emphasizes this dimension when he states: "Metropolitan governance highlights values of negotiation, partnership, voluntary participation, and flexibility..." (P. 18). In the case of the RGS, were the local authorities merely consulted, or empowered to deliberate, collaborate, or co-decide together with other municipalities? The process to create the RGS involved considerable consultation (outlined below); the question here is the type of participation, influence, and degree of collaboration facilitated through the process. An in-depth case study of Metro Vancouver, and the process to create the RGS, will help answer these questions.

To undertake an interpretive analysis of the "optimistic hypothesis" in Metro Vancouver, and explore the extent to which collaboration, negotiation and deliberation took place in the case of the RGS, this study will explore the participation of one locality in particular - the City of Burnaby - as well as CSOs who participated in the process to create the RGS. The City of Burnaby is the third most populous city in the metro Vancouver region (Statistics Canada, 2012), and has had a relatively stable internal political climate under Mayor Derek Corrigan for the past eleven years ("City of Burnaby: Our City Hall", n.d.). Further, written submissions from Burnaby concerning the RGS were the most extensive of all the municipalities, and the submission from 2007 explicitly requests Metro Vancouver to undertake a "collaborative and deliberative" process (City of Burnaby, 2007). An examination of the perspective from participants who represented the City of Burnaby, as well the formal submissions from Burnaby regarding the RGS,

provides a good indication of the extent to which local authorities in the region were capable of influencing the RGS and collaborating with one another. In terms of influence from CSOs, the many civic associations who participated in the process outlined in Appendix A provides an opportunity to discover whether this dimension to the optimistic hypothesis is borne out in the case of Metro Vancouver as well.

Although this research study is an interpretive effort, rather than a comparative or “criteria-based” study, it is necessary to begin with a basic framework of concepts or criteria with which to proceed. The comparative case study by Brigitte Schwab and Daniel Kubler had a range of criteria-based indicators for the “optimistic hypothesis”, whereby new regionalism could potentially enable civic association involvement as well as more deliberative decision-making. These indicators are outlined here (Kubler and Schwab, 2007, p. 491):

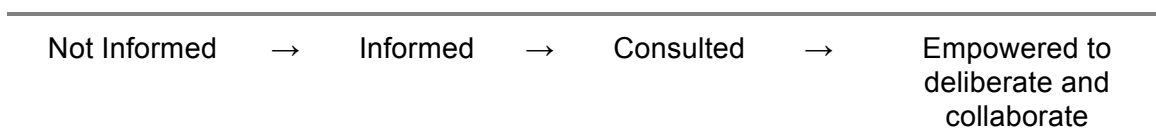
- No associations or citizens involved
- Associations or citizens consulted for inputs
- Associations or citizens co-decide
- Decision making by majority votes
- Decision making by compromise reached through negotiation
- Decision making by consensus reached through deliberation

The indicators above represent ‘a priori’ principles, or criteria, of democracy. Similar indicators are identified elsewhere in academic literature regarding democratic decision-making. In terms of effective participation and/or influence, Kennedy Stewart’s (2007) paper entitled “Write the Rules and Win: Understanding Citizen Participation Game Dynamics” provides a matrix that gauges the extent to which different

mechanisms provide constituents with agenda-setting and decision-making control. In terms of decision-making control, the matrix outlines the following levels: 1) informative, 2) consultative, and 3) delegative (Stewart, 2007, p. 1070).

In the case of Metro Vancouver, we know that: 1) final decision-making is by majority voting (albeit by a board that is indirectly elected), and 2) civic associations were involved in the process, but were not delegated full decision-making authority. What is not known is whether the creation of the RGS enabled the sort of collaboration, deliberation and negotiation envisioned by Kubler and Schwab, as well as proponents of the ‘new regionalism’ approach to metropolitan governance, for either the CSOs that were involved, or for local authorities such as Burnaby. Secondly, it is not known whether the process enabled participants to actually *influence* regional decision-making. Therefore, the following scale of influence and participation will be applied and used as a conceptual framework for this study in an effort to capture these two closely related aspects of collaborative decision-making at the regional scale (Figure 2-1):

Figure 2-1 Scale of Influence and Participation



‘Informed’ is taken from the lower level of Kennedy Stewart’s matrix, whereby participants are informed of the process but have no capacity whatsoever to influence decision-making outcomes. ‘Consulted’ is taken from both Stewart’s matrix and Kubler and Schwab’s indicator pertaining to decision-making. ‘Empowered to deliberate and collaborate’, at the higher end of the scale, is meant to capture the ‘optimistic hypothesis’ by Kubler and Schwab, and proponents of new regionalism.

The 'new regionalism' approach to metropolitan governance is meant to combine elements of regional decision-making together with local authority. Whether formal or informal, the optimistic perspective on this approach views 'new regionalism' as a mechanism to achieve collaboration, coordination, and deliberation between fragmented political units in a metropolitan region. Metro Vancouver is a formal institution with these aims, and has an explicit goal to 'act as a regional forum'. In fact, in 2014 Metro Vancouver further defined the way in which they will "Act as a Regional Forum" as follows: "Build and facilitate collaborative processes..."¹¹ By performing an interpretive analysis grounded in the criteria outlined above, the intention is to examine a specific case of 'collective action' in Metro Vancouver – the Regional Growth Strategy. This analysis will reveal whether Metro Vancouver enabled local authorities and civil organizations to influence regional outcomes, and whether this effort at collective action achieved the collaboration and deliberation that is theoretically possible in the new regionalism approach to metropolitan governance.

¹¹ Metro Vancouver, About Us (Web): <http://www.metrovancouver.org/about/Pages/default.aspx>

Chapter 3. Methodology

The research project had two stages: a document review phase and a participant interview phase. Between 2006 and 2010 Metro Vancouver undertook a comprehensive effort to engage members of the public, community groups, regional agencies, and member municipalities in the creation of the RGS. The research study focused on documents from this period as well as individuals who participated in the consultation for the RGS. Interview participants included individuals who represented the City of Burnaby, CSOs, and who were employees of Metro Vancouver in this time frame. In the document review phase, the following reports were collected and examined (outlined further in Table 3-1 below):

- Advancing the Sustainable Region – Issues for the Livable Strategic Plan Review 2005
- Draft versions of the Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) between 2007 – 2011, and the final version in 2011. These include an initial discussion paper called ‘Choosing our Future’ in 2007, two draft versions of the RGS in 2009 (February and November), a draft version in 2010, and the final version ratified in 2011.
- Metro Vancouver Reports – reports that summarized submissions made by civic groups and local municipalities, made to the Metro Vancouver Board between 2007 and 2011.
- Submissions by the City of Burnaby to Metro Vancouver in response to the draft versions of the RGS. Submissions were made in 2007, three times in 2009, and again in 2010.
- Submissions by Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) in response to the draft versions of the RGS. Submissions were received in 2007, 2009 and 2010.

- Meeting minutes of the Land Use and Transportation Committee, the Greater Vancouver Regional District (GVRD) Board, and the Regional Planning Committee between 2006-2010, when the Regional Growth Strategy was discussed.

Table 3-1 Regional Growth Strategy Submissions 2006-2010

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2009	2010
Documents:						
Regional Growth Strategy		November 'Choosing Our Future' Document		February Draft Version	November Draft Version	September Draft Version
Metro Vancouver Reports				Summary of Municipal and Group Submissions		Summary of Municipal and Group Submissions
City of Burnaby - Submissions to Metro Vancouver		November submission		March and April - Submission	Municipal Submission	Municipal Submission
Feedback from Groups and Agencies		Submissions received		Submissions received	Submissions received	Submissions received
Reports to the Metro Board	Report to Land Use and Transportation Committee	Report to Land Use and Transportation Committee	Report to Land Use and Transportation Committee Pt. 1 and 2	Report to GVRD Board		Report to GVRD Board

This table does not include an outline of the meeting minutes mentioned above. These are outlined in Appendix B. All of the above documents, and those outlined in Appendix B, are publicly available on the Metro Vancouver website. A preliminary analysis was done to gain some familiarity with the content of the RGS, and the changes

to the RGS that occurred throughout the review period. In addition, all of the written submissions from the City of Burnaby and civic groups were reviewed. Each written submission was summarized into a table for easy reference, and to gain familiarity with the issues and items that were being raised in the written submissions. Subsequent to the creation of this table, the respective versions of the RGS were examined again to try and identify any possible correlations between issues raised in the written submissions and change to the RGS. These instances were compiled into a table.

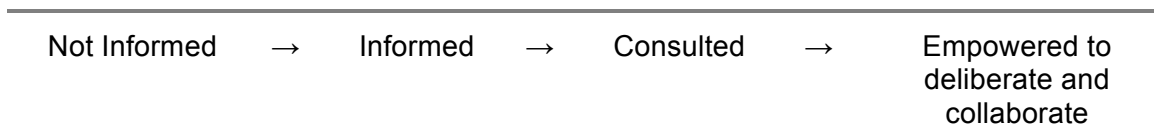
The second phase of data collection consisted of 11 in-depth interviews. Prospective participants were recruited from: 1) civic groups that made written submissions as part of the consultation process, 2) current and former Metro Vancouver staff, 3) former planning directors with the City of Burnaby. The following individuals participated in interviews for this study – four of whom are identified using a pseudonym for confidentiality.

Table 3-2 Interviewees – Participants in the Regional Growth Strategy

Organization & Position during the period of RGS review	Name
Former Development Issues Chair – National Association of Industrial and Office Properties (NAIOP)	Graeme
Former Regional Development Division Manager – Metro Vancouver	Chris
Members – Livable Cities Coalition	Andrew and Eric
Executive Director – Dynamic Cities Project	Bryn
Mayor – City of Burnaby	Derek
Conservation Chair – Burke Mountain Naturalists	Elaine
Executive Vice President, Policy – Business Council of BC	Jock
Former Manager of Planning and Policy – Metro Vancouver	Hugh
Former Director of Planning – City of Burnaby	Alex
Former Director of Planning – City of Burnaby	Brian
Senior Advisor - Urban Development Institute	Bill

Participants above were asked questions about their perceptions of the decision-making process for the Regional Growth Strategy¹². The semi-structured interviews were intended to uncover whether participants felt that the submissions made by them or others: 1) were given a reasonable amount of consideration, 2) were considered and discussed by *other* participants in the process. Participants were asked whether they had an opportunity to consider submissions made by *other* participants, and whether they had an opportunity to discuss and deliberate amongst other groups, agencies, or municipalities. This was meant to assist in rating the quality of their respective influence over the RGS along the following scale (Fig. 3-1):

Figure 3-1 Scale of Influence and Participation



The interviews were first transcribed and then coded using an iterative, grounded-theory, approach. Feldman et al (2004) outline a methodological approach to narrative analysis to understand the process and nature of organizational change in public administrations. The authors note that an overall story can be established that relates to the topic of interest (p. 154). In their case, the topic of interest is organizational change. For the purposes of this study, the topic of interest is ‘influence’ or ‘collaboration’. A process of open coding and memoing was used to discover the theories or concepts pertaining to ‘influence’ from the interviews. Babbie and Benaquisto (2002) describe the initial step in this process as the identification of multiple themes and ideas that occur to the researcher (p. 382). These initial ideas were noted in the margins

¹² Guiding questions are outlined in Appendix C.

of the interview transcripts. Subsequently, these ideas were grouped together into overall concepts.

This approach is utilized by Navdeep Mathur and Chris Skelcher (2007) to evaluate democratic performance in network governance arrangements from qualitative interview data. These authors suggest that the narrative analysis method put forward by Feldman et al is a useful added dimension to evaluating democratic performance. In their study, narrative analysis is used together with document review to illustrate the 'democratic-quality' of network governance arrangements (ie, regional governance arrangements). They utilize the same criteria to review documentation from regional governance institutions and to guide the analysis of interviews with decision-makers. Taken together, the two methods yield an overall assessment of the democratic quality of network governance arrangements.

For this study, overall concepts from the interview analysis were then considered and related to the findings from the document review phase, and the specific suggestions made in each written submission. This process revealed some very strong themes, which were used to construct the overall narrative in the sections below. Two themes that emerged from the interviews and document review phase were: 1) the regulatory framework within which the RGS was created and 2) the strong focus on sustainability. These themes necessitated further background research in each of these areas.

The intent was to uncover whether the 'influence' exerted by Burnaby and CSOs exceeded 'consultation' through deliberation, collaboration or negotiation. On the scale outlined in Figure 3-1 this level has been referred to as collaboration or deliberation. By

combining the results from the document review together with the narrative analysis outlined above, the objective is to provide an overall account of the 'degree of influence' exerted by: 1) Burnaby and 2) CSOs over the RGS. If the process to create the RGS enabled collaboration and deliberation between Burnaby and other local authorities, and between CSOs, then Metro Vancouver was effective as a political forum under the new regionalism approach to metropolitan governance according to the criteria set forth in this study.

Chapter 4. Background and Context

4.1. Regional Land Use Planning in Metro Vancouver

Metro Vancouver's history and origins extend back to the early part of the 20th century. The Greater Vancouver Sewerage and Drainage District (GVSD) and the Greater Vancouver Water District (GVWD) predate the GVRD, and were created in 1914 and 1926 respectively. These bodies were regional service providers to provide coordinated utility services to the member municipalities. For the earlier part of the 20th century the only regional government organizations in existence in BC consisted of these single-purpose regional bodies, with a single area of jurisdiction. This changed in 1949 with the creation of the Lower Mainland Regional Planning Board, and again in 1965 when the provincial government passed enabling legislation allowing for the creation of regional districts. The legislation allowing for the creation of regional districts did not outline functions of any kind, and did not actually create regional districts. Functions, and the creation of the actual regional districts, were left at the discretion of a provincial Minister to be determined on a case by case basis (Tennant, 1973). When the Greater Vancouver Regional District was created in 1967, 13 other regional districts had already been created. Five years later, in 1972, the functions of the GVSD and the GVWD were consolidated under the GVRD.

Regional planning in Metro Vancouver mirrors the organization's long history and incremental growth. Further, the origins of a governance based, consensus oriented

approach to regional planning can be seen in Metro Vancouver as far back as the 1960s and 1970s. The predecessor to the Regional Growth Strategy was the Livable Region Strategic Plan (LRSP) ratified by the GVRD Board of Directors and by the province as an official regional growth strategy in 1996 (GVRD, 1996). The LRSP was based on a five year long process of “consultation and discussion” that entailed working through the dissent of three municipalities prior to ratification (Smith, 1996, p. 156). Patrick J. Smith (1996) notes that the planning process in this case demonstrated how a consensual model of governance can be a viable alternative to the government restructuring that was being pursued in Ontario at the time. In reference to BC’s history of regional planning, he notes specifically that “the British Columbia experience supports the notion that metropolitan governance is a clear alternative to metropolitan government” (p. 156)

The background to the LRSP describes the long history of regional plans in Metro Vancouver, beginning with the Official Regional Plan in 1966, the Livable Region Plan in 1976 and 1986, and the Creating Our Future plan in 1990 (GVRD, 1996; Smith, Oberlander, and Hutton, 1996). However, regional planning in Metro Vancouver extends back before the creation of the GVRD itself to when the Lower Mainland Regional Planning Board was created by the Province in 1949 (Alexander et al, 2005). The Board at this time comprised one representative from each constituent municipality¹³, and was

¹³ By contrast, the Board of 2014 consists of 40 directors representing twenty-one municipalities, one First Nation, and one municipality that is a member of the board for the parks function. The number of directors appointed to the board depends on the population of the municipality, and directors are allowed one vote for every 20,000 people in their municipality (Metro Vancouver, 2014) Web (accessed on September 16, 2014): <http://www.metrovancouver.org/boards/Pages/directors.aspx>

the governing body responsible for the original regional plan created in 1966¹⁴. When, in 1967, the GVRD was created, Alexander et al (2005) note that many of the ideas from the original regional plan from 1966 carried on in the work of the GVRD after the consolidation in 1972. Smith (1996) notes further that the planning undertaken by the GVRD in the 1960s and 1970s was based extensive consultation, and centred around the following five strategies (p. 158):

- Establishing various core areas and job targets for these;
- Creating regional town centres;
- Allocating residential growth so it was consistent with jobs and services;
- Preserving farmland, parkland, significant view sites and;
- Establishing a light rail system as the key to achieving the other four strategies.

The intention of the regional plans is to manage population growth in such a way that preserves the environment and maintains the 'livability' of the region for a growing number of people. Sustainability has been a central focus of the regional plans, grounded in the Vision statement set out in the Creating Our Future plan from 1990:

Greater Vancouver can become the first urban region in the world to combine in one place the things to which humanity aspires on a global basis: a place where human activities enhance rather than degrade the natural environment, where the quality of the built environment approaches that of the natural setting, where the diversity of origins and religions is a source of social strength rather than strife, where people control the destiny of their community; and where the basics of food, clothing, shelter, security, and useful activity are accessible to all. (Greater Vancouver Regional District, 1990).

¹⁴ It should be noted also that the LMRPB was much larger in geographic scope than its successor, the GVRD, created in 1967. The LMRPB covered the whole region from Vancouver, extending to the mountains and up the Fraser Valley to Hope (Smith, 1996, p. 157). This region was divided up into four regions in 1967, one of which was the GVRD.

The same Vision statement was used again in the Livable Region Strategic Plan (LRSP) of 1990. The LRSP from 1996 further developed the sustainability focus with the following four specific strategies: 1) Protect the Green Zone, 2) Build Complete Communities, 3) Achieve a Compact Metropolitan Region, 4) Increase Transportation Choice (GVRD, 1996). When the GVRD began its review of the LRSP in 2001 it was explicitly decided that sustainability would be a central focus (Alexander et al, 2005). The Vision Statement to the Regional Growth Strategy describes the Sustainable Region Initiative, which invokes similar language from the LRSP Vision Statement from 1990 (Metro Vancouver, 2011).

There are two elements to this extensive history that are worth noting. In the first place, the policy goals and overall direction of regional planning in Metro Vancouver has an extensive historical basis and exhibits incremental changes within an overall framework focusing on sustainability. Secondly, much of the organization's history has been as a service provider to the constituent municipalities, specifically utility services. Beginning with water and sewerage, Metro Vancouver gradually took on an increasing number of roles to deliver on behalf of the municipalities, eventually including housing and parks functions.

These origins have a strong influence on the decision-making process at Metro Vancouver. The consensual decision-making culture of the organization may be related to its historical role as a service provider. However, this same history may also influence the degree to which the organization can provide a political forum for complex policy issues. A senior executive with the Business Council of BC questioned Metro Vancouver's ability to take on macro-level policy discussions, without an explicit mandate to do so and with a culture as a utility provider:

I mean they're basically a glorified utility. That's really what, that's how they grew up, was to provide kind of shared infrastructure services in the utility space. It's an engineering and planning kind of culture as an institution. ...they do a good job I would say in some of those functions, from what I can tell. I think they have good engineers, they've got good technical people. They're good at doing planning around that. But once you get up to the more macro policy files, including the ones the business community cares about, they fall away. It's really not their bread and butter.

This statement captures a conflicting tension in terms of Metro Vancouver's capacity to provide a political forum for "macro-level" policy issues. Metro Vancouver has a certain degree of credibility, authenticity and trust at the municipal level based on the extensive history outlined above. However, this framework and background may prove challenging as the organization takes on a regulatory role for areas requiring more normative policy decisions such as land use. In creating regional districts in BC the government was explicit in its intent not to create a political amalgamation. Smith (2006) quotes Municipal Affairs Minister Dan Campbell: "regional districts are not conceived as a fourth level of government, but as functional rather than a political amalgamation" (p. 156). With this foundation, taking on a regional growth strategy that was to be far more regulatory in nature than prior versions could prove to be a daunting task for the institution.

There is one sphere in which it is strikingly evident that Metro Vancouver's role as service provider is conflicted and historically contested: transportation. In 1999 the province created the Greater Vancouver Transportation Authority (GVTA), transferring the responsibility for the delivery of transportation and related services from the province to the region (Smith and Oberlander, 2006). Although the GVTA (later named "Translink") was technically separate from Metro Vancouver, twelve of the fifteen board members of Translink were members of Metro Vancouver, with the remaining three

positions to be provincial cabinet ministers (Smith and Oberlander, 2006). Metro Vancouver thereby had a significant role in regional transportation decisions. In 2006, in the midst of a dispute between the Province and the Translink board over the decision to build the RAV rapid transit line between Richmond and Vancouver, provincial Minister of Transportation Kevin Falcon announced a panel to review Translink's governance framework, noting there was "...too much focus on local backyard politics..." (CBC, March 2006). Subsequently, in 2007, the governance structure was changed such that a Mayor's Council now appoints an independent Board of Directors for Translink (Translink, 2014). There is no longer direct involvement of Metro Vancouver board members in transportation discussions or decisions for the region.

The history of regional jurisdiction over land-use planning in British Columbia reveals a similar degree of contestation and a lack of clarity surrounding Metro Vancouver's mandate. The regional plans mentioned above were aspirational in nature – they set out growth planning ideas and overall goals such as the preservation of agriculture and green space. Although regional planning continued into the 1980's, the province removed regional planning authority from regional districts in 1983 because of a land-use dispute between the GVRD and the Province (Smith, 2006). The authority to plan regionally was restored by the Province in 1995 under the Growth Strategies Act, which enabled regional districts to plan regionally and allowed the province to mediate in cases of disagreement (Smith, 2006). The Livable Region Strategic Plan of 1996 was passed under this legislation, as well as the RGS of 2011.

As mentioned above, the LRSP of 1996 included the same vision statement from the Choosing our Future plan created in 1990. An extensive consultation process took place between 1990 and 1996, based on the 'Creating Our Future' vision adopted by the

GVRD board in 1990 (GVRD, 1996, p. 18). The LRSP delineated the specific goals mentioned above (protect the green zone, build complete communities, achieve a compact region and increase transportation choices). However, discretion over *how* to achieve the goals of the LRSP was left at the discretion of the municipalities or other regional agencies. The plan outlines actions and policies that GVRD will take towards each of the goals, but imposes no policies or regulations on local government authorities, transportation authorities or others. The LRSP outlines an approach based on partnerships with a range of agencies and authorities to achieve each of the four goals. Under 'Implementation' the LRSP states that the "...Plan contains several broad policies intended to help guide its implementation. These policies focus on the partnerships that are needed to achieve the stated goals." (GVRD, 1996, p. 14).

The RGS, on the other hand, outlines specific expectations and actions required for Metro Vancouver, the municipalities, the provincial government, and Translink under each of five broad goals (Metro Vancouver, 2011). Under 'Implementation' the RGS outlines a "collaborative decision-making framework" with the following characteristic: "The Regional Growth Strategy has been designed so that the more regionally significant an issue, the higher the degree of Metro Vancouver involvement in decision-making."¹⁵ (Metro Vancouver, 2011, p. 57). While the LRSP describes how all the GVRD municipalities submitted regional context statements demonstrating how they will support the regional plan, the RGS requires all the municipalities to submit regional context statements within two years of RGS ratification, and requires that amendments to regional context statements be submitted to the Metro Vancouver Board for approval

¹⁵ With the exception of transportation related issues, as these would fall under Translink's jurisdiction.

(Metro Vancouver, 2011, p. 57-59). However, in a court case with the Township of Langley described further below, Metro Vancouver's authority in this regard has been directly challenged.

The change to a more regulatory approach described above is one of two elements that exert a significant influence over the organization's capacity to act as a political forum in the case of the RGS. In the first place, Metro Vancouver has a long history, most of which is as a utility service provider. While water and sewerage are indisputably utility functions, land use planning has the potential to be far more political. It is possible that the GVRD's founding framework as a "functional" authority, as opposed to a political amalgamation, may restrain progress towards the goals of land use planning on a regional scale. Secondly, land use planning at the regional scale has been contested and historically centred around sustainability; despite regional planning going back to the 1950s, the RGS is only the second regional plan under the current legislation (1995 Growth Strategies Act). The RGS thereby adopted a much more regulatory approach than the previous plan, which greatly influenced the review and consultation process.

These factors could frustrate the degree to which Metro Vancouver is capable of acting as a 'political forum' for the constituent local authorities when it comes to regional planning. Although Metro Vancouver has an extensive history with considerable credibility, providing a mechanism for each municipality to exert influence and collaborate with one another in a contested, and potentially political, issue area may prove difficult, especially with a move towards a more regulatory approach. To begin an examination of whether this is the case, the next section provides background regarding the process to create the Regional Growth Strategy that was ratified in 2011.

4.2. Metro Vancouver 2040 – Shaping Our Future: The 2011 Regional Growth Strategy

4.2.1. *The Sustainability Framework*

A document titled 'Issues for the Livable Region Strategic Plan Review' from March 15, 2005 describes how "The GVRD Board resolved that a review of the Livable Region Strategic Plan and other regional mandate plans should be undertaken using the principles of sustainability." (Metro Vancouver, 2005). The review process initially consisted of disseminating informational documents to municipalities and civic associations from throughout the region for their review and feedback. The 'Issues for the Livable Region Strategic Plan Review' from March of 2005 was the first of these documents, and had three sections. The first section provided background on the Sustainable Region Initiative (SRI) – an initiative that was started by Metro Vancouver in 2002 to "...put the concept of sustainability at the centre of its operating and planning philosophy..." and to "...make the region one which is explicitly committed to a sustainable future." (Metro Vancouver, 2010, p. 8). The SRI process included the formation of a Partners Group¹⁶, conferences and workshops with key partners and interested parties, and reports identifying sustainability actions (Metro Vancouver, 2005, p. 3).

Section 2 of the document described some key drivers of growth looking out to the year 2031, and the third section presented six key "challenge areas" moving forward. The six key challenge areas are as follows:

- Accommodating Growth and Conserving our Resources

¹⁶ Comprised of representatives of up to 25 civic organizations from the region.

- Supporting a Sustainable, Competitive Economy
- Advancing the Green Region
- Designing for Sustainable Communities
- Connecting Growth Management and Transportation
- Delivering Effective Regional Growth Management

There is a strong similarity between these “challenge areas” and the four goals from the 1996 LRSP:

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

As outlined in section 4.1, the vision statement from the 1996 LRSP was the same as the ‘Creating our Future Document’ from 1990. The focus on sustainability in regional planning for the past 20 years is clear when the first line from the respective vision statements are put together, as below in Table 4.1 (Note: The 1996 LRSP included the same vision from Creating Our Future, so it is not listed here):

Table 4-1 Regional Plan Vision Statements

Creating Our Future	Regional Growth Strategy
1990	2011
<p>Greater Vancouver can become the first urban region in the world to combine in one place the things to which humanity aspires on a global basis: a place where human activities enhance rather than degrade the natural environment, where the quality of the built environment approaches that of the natural setting, where the diversity of origins and religions is a source of social strength rather than strife, where people control the destiny of their community; and where the basics of food, clothing, shelter, security, and useful activity are accessible to all.</p>	<p>Metro Vancouver has an opportunity and a vision to achieve what humanity aspires to on a global basis – the highest quality of life embracing cultural vitality, economic prosperity, social justice and compassion, all nurtured in and by a beautiful and healthy natural environment.</p>

Following the initial document “Issues for the Livable Region Strategic Plan Review” in 2005, Metro Vancouver distributed a document titled “Choosing Our Future: Options for Metro Vancouver’s Growth Management Strategy” in 2007. This document provided future growth projections, future challenges and proposed five goals for the regional plan. Metro Vancouver subsequently created and disseminated draft strategies for public review and feedback in February 2009, November 2009, September 2010, culminating in the final version of the RGS in 2011. Table 4.2 below outlines the goals or “challenge areas” outlined in each of these documents, beginning with the initial discussion paper from March 2005.

Table 4-2 Challenge Areas/Goals from Regional Plan drafts and Discussion Papers: 2005 - 2011

Issues for the LRSP Review 2005	Creating Our Future 2007	RGS Draft February 2009	RGS Draft November 2009	RGS Draft September 2010	RGS Final Version 2011
Accommodating Growth and Conserving our Resources	A sustainable, compact metropolitan structure	Create a Compact Urban Area	Create a Compact Urban Area	Create a Compact Urban Area	Create a Compact Urban Area
Supporting a Sustainable, Competitive Economy	Diverse and affordable housing choices	Support a Sustainable Economy	Support a Sustainable Economy	Support a Sustainable Economy	Support a Sustainable Economy
Advancing the Green Region	A strong diverse regional economy	Protect the Region's Natural Assets	Protect the Region's Environment and Respond to Climate Change	Protect the Region's Environment and Respond to Climate Change	Protect the Environment and Respond to Climate Change Impacts
Designing for Sustainable Communities	Protect and enhance the region's natural assets	Develop Complete and Resilient Communities	Develop Complete Communities	Develop Complete Communities	Develop Complete Communities
Connecting Growth Management and Transportation	A sustainable regional transportation system	Support Sustainable Transportation Choices	Support Sustainable Transportation Choices	Support Sustainable Transportation Choices	Support Sustainable Transportation Choices
Delivering Effective Regional Growth Management					

The strategic focus on sustainability can be clearly traced back to origins at least as far as 1990, with regional goals that have remained centred on sustainability consistently over the last 25 years and throughout the review and creation of the RGS. In fact, a former manager of planning and policy with Metro Vancouver commented that: "...you can see the bones of the current strategy in all the previous strategies, going back to the 60s". This is an important dimension to Metro Vancouver's capacity to act as

a regional forum, as it established a very specific framework within which all discussions pertaining to the RGS were required to align.

4.2.2. *The Regulatory Framework*

It has been mentioned that the RGS is more regulatory than previous regional land use plans. This will be outlined further here, but before doing so it is necessary to briefly outline the regulatory framework within which regional growth strategies are enabled in British Columbia. The RGS, and the LRSP before it, were adopted under the Local Government Act – Part 25 – Regional Growth Strategies - of 1995. The Act is enabling legislation; it does not require regional districts in BC to create regional growth strategies, and in fact there are many regional districts in BC without one. The Act simply allows regional districts to create regional growth strategies, and sets out guidelines for how they are to proceed when doing so. The discretion over the decision to create an RGS rests with the regional boards (Local Government Act, Section 854), and requires that all of the “affected local governments” must accept a RGS before it can be adopted (Local Government Act, Section 857).

The legislation governing regional growth strategies also requires regional districts to undertake consultation with the following groups/individuals (Local Government Act, Section 855):

- its citizens
- affected local governments
- first nations
- school district board, greater boards and improvement district boards, and
- the Provincial and federal governments and their agencies

The Act requires regional growth strategies to cover at least 20 years, to include a statement on the future of the region including the “social, economic and environmental objectives of the board in relation to the regional district”, population and growth projections, and targets for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions (Local Government Act, Section 850). It is also proposed that strategies should include actions for the regional district to provide for the needs of the projected population in relation to housing, transportation, services, parks and economic development (though this is not required under the Act), and lastly that: “a regional growth strategy may deal with any other regional matter.” (Local Government Act, Section 850).

The Act thereby leaves a great deal of discretion over regional growth strategies with regional boards. The decision of whether or not to create a regional land use plan, and what to include, is left with representatives of local governments as long as the broad areas mentioned above are addressed. Nonetheless, for those that do opt to proceed, the Act’s basic requirement that plans must look forward at least 20 years and set out “social, economic and environmental objectives” is unique in the municipal landscape in BC. There is no other legislation requiring municipalities to plan for the long term or to set out social, economic and environmental goals. At issue, however, is whether municipalities have sufficient tools at their disposal to address long term social, economic and environmental objectives. Goals of this calibre will inevitably require the participation and cooperation of multiple agents and levels of government. This dimension to the legislation governing regional growth strategies in BC exerts a strong influence over the degree to which regional districts can, and should, act as regional political forums.

When it comes to the implementation and monitoring of a regional plan, the Act requires a response by the affected local governments within 60 days of receiving the plan, who must review the regional growth strategy in the context of any official community plans (Local Government Act, Section 857). Municipalities are required to pass a council resolution accepting the Act or indicate their objections to the plan within the 60 day time frame. The municipality will have been deemed to accept the plan if they fail to do so (Local Government Act, Section 857 (6)). Subsequently, municipalities must submit regional context statements which identify the relationship between their Official Community Plans (OCPs) and the issues addressed in the RGS and if applicable, how their OCPs will be made consistent with the RGS over time.

In summary, the Act's legislation is set up such that municipalities, through their regional board, can jointly decide to pursue and create a regional growth strategy. To do so requires setting out broad long term goals. Once a RGS is created and adopted, the municipalities must demonstrate their adherence to the plan through Regional Context Statements. One difficulty with this framework is the broad, long-term goals that are expected in these regional plans. While the regional district model in BC, and the legislation governing regional land use planning, provides a forum for local authorities to discuss and agree on long-term goals in critical issue areas such as the environment and the economy, extensive overarching goals of this nature will require cooperation and agreement across a whole range of actors including businesses, regional organizations and, most importantly, other levels of government. Yet the legislation does not enable or provide any explicit mechanism to involve this range of stakeholders in achieving the goals set out in a regional plan. Prior to adoption, the Act does require that a regional

growth strategy must be sent to the following entities prior to third reading (Local Government Act, Section 857):

- the board of the South Coast British Columbia Transportation Authority (if the RGS is for the GVRD)
- the board of each adjoining regional district
- the provincial facilitator who has been designated, or the minister

However, the Act does not outline if, or how, these entities can influence or comment on the plan, or that they must accept the plan. Presumably they would be able to submit comments prior to third reading, but whether or how any comments would be included is not outlined. The end result is a framework that cannot compel other entities or other levels of government to work towards the social, environmental or economic goals set out by a regional district.

The result is an absence of a clear lines of authority when it comes to regional planning, or enforcing a RGS. The difficulties with this approach were borne out in the courts after the ratification of the RGS. The final version requires municipalities to submit amendments of their regional context statements to the Metro Vancouver Board for approval. Metro Vancouver is currently reviewing four amendments from municipalities, has accepted six, and declined two.¹⁷ However, one of the declined applications is from the Township of Langley, and resulted in a court case (*Greater Vancouver (Regional District) v. Langley (Township)*). The township was looking to develop an area within the “Green Zone” of the previous LRSP. Metro Vancouver submitted that an alteration of the Green Zone required approval by the regional board. The Supreme Court of British

¹⁷ Metro Vancouver: Amendments, Web (accessed on September 15, 2014): <http://www.metrovancouver.org/planning/development/strategy/Pages/Amendments.aspx>

Columbia ultimately ruled that "...a regional district's planning and land use management powers do not apply to those parts of the regional district that are within a municipality"¹⁸. The ruling highlights the importance and emphasis on coordination between "various planning documents" such as an OCP and a RGS, but that there is no statutory requirement for an OCP to be consistent with a RGS.

The legislation from the Act is not necessarily an encumbrance or a catalyst in terms of Metro Vancouver's capacity to act as a regional forum for local authorities. As mentioned above, the LRSP adopted in 1996 was aspirational; while the goals outlined in the plan touched on social, environmental and economic issues, discretion over how to move towards the goals was left with each municipality and was not delineated in the plan itself. The RGS of 2011, however, took a different direction. A clear understanding of this direction is critical to understanding how Metro Vancouver was capable of acting as a political forum from the perspective of new regionalism. The RGS took a more regulatory approach, with specific roles and expectations for different regional actors, and more stringent implementation guidelines for municipalities. In this context, the resulting political forum, and the collaboration between parties to create the plan, was fundamentally different from previous iterations.

The more regulatory direction of the RGS over previous plans can be traced to the preliminary consultations that were held on the proposed issues, goals and strategies for the Metro Vancouver RGS beginning in November 2007 (the consultations themselves are described in further detail in section 4.2.3 below). A questionnaire was

¹⁸ Supreme Court of British Columbia. March 12, 2014. *Greater Vancouver (Regional District) v. Langley (Township)*. <http://bcrelinks.com/articles/phk-greater-vancouver-regional-district-v-langley-twu-and-wall.pdf>

distributed to participants at the public meetings that were held, which had open ended questions on the issues and a proposed vision. The questionnaire also asked respondents to choose the desirable implementation action on a spectrum ranging from broad goals to some form of regional regulation for each of the proposed strategies (Land Use and Transportation Committee, February 2008, p. 2). A sample of one of the sets of response options from the questionnaire is as follows (Land Use and Transportation Committee, March 2008, Attachment 3):

Strategy: Focus regional growth in centres and along transit corridors

Response Options:

- a) State general goals for municipalities to focus development in centres along transit corridors
- b) Identify the centres and transit corridor locations on a regional map and provide general guidelines
- c) Designate regional and municipal town centres and transit corridor locations on a regional map and provide targets and guidelines

The responses above illustrate a spectrum between a more aspirational or goal oriented set of strategies versus a more prescriptive and regulatory approach. The reports to the Land Use and Transportation Committee in early 2008 notes that:

Generally respondents tended to pick alternative c) in the spectrum of alternatives, the one associated with more regulation in the regional plan. However, it is not clear whether they necessarily felt that regional regulation was *the* solution but it was an indication that the current system of local and regional planning was not adequate and that stronger policies were needed at either the municipal or regional level in order to achieve the stated goals. (p. 2)

As mentioned above, the resulting final version of the RGS was far more regulatory than the LRSP. Specifically, the plan is more prescriptive in the following ways:

- Requires municipalities to submit Regional Context Statements within a limited timeframe, and outlines very specific requirements for regional context statements.
- Requires amended RCSs to be submitted to the Metro Vancouver board for approval
- Delineates specific land-use designations (Including industrial, mixed employment, conservation and recreation, general urban and rural)
- Outlines specific performance measures for each of the goals
- Specific policies for municipalities to make changes to the land use designations, which require Metro Vancouver board approval

The more regulatory approach of the RGS was motivated at least in part by senior staff at Metro Vancouver, and shortcomings in the past with the LRSP in terms of implementation. A former senior planner at Metro Vancouver who was involved with the RGS notes that:

...the other thing about making it possible was that there had been some pretty dramatic misses in the past. ...we tried to stop that development around Riverport in Richmond, you know where I mean, where the housing is by the river. And we said look it's against complete communities, protecting the green zone, transportation choices, compact region, you know so on the four premises of the LRSP it falls down on everything, but there was nothing we could actually hang our hat on. So then we appealed to the minister to help us out on this, the minister at the time I can't remember who it was, and he said no, he wasn't going to interfere. So that frustrated the board. There were a few examples like that, things that were clearly against the LRSP, but then our hands were tied to do anything about it.

She also noted the desire of senior staff of Metro Vancouver to have some mechanism to protect industrial land. For these reasons, she noted that she and a

colleague were advocates of a more regulatory approach. In reference to the RGS that was adopted; she stated further that:

So now, with the growth strategy in place, if something is identified industrial, it's, you have to go through an amendment process to make it mixed employment or make it something else. So you know it's definitely better than the situation when any Monday night somebody could take a piece of industrial land and rezone it or re-designate it for office.

Specifically, the more rigorous amendment process, which led to the court case with the Township of Langley, is fundamentally different than the LRSP. It is important to understand this aspect of the RGS in the context of Metro Vancouver's capacity to provide a forum for governance. What is clear is that a more regulatory approach was pursued and desired from the outset. This aspect of the regional plan shaped the discussions and collaboration that took place, and the degree to which municipalities and civic groups were interested in, and could influence, the final product. As a departure from the goal-oriented nature of the LRSP, the RGS represented a marked difference in the approach to regional planning taken by the region for the last 45 years. Another former senior level planner with Metro Vancouver stated that:

There were some that were concerned about the legitimacy of the whole exercise. The earlier plan was the livable region strategic plan, which was kind of like a cooperative document. And then in the mid 1990s the growth strategies act came in. And then the plan was finally adopted under the growth strategies act, which imposed these obligations on municipalities, which they thought were kind of vague and fuzzy. So they thought that metro had sort of surreptitiously increased its control over the local community, so they were concerned about this new exercise as doing the same thing.

Although regional planning, and Metro Vancouver, have a long history and considerable credibility, the RGS was an endeavour to take on overarching sustainability goals from the last 20 years in a manner that was more prescriptive and regionally

regulated than previous regional plans. The decision to do so strikes at a core challenge facing metropolitan regions. Savitch and Vogel (1996) note that in order to pursue effective policies, metropolitan regions need to be politically viable. However, when regional policies go “beyond the bounds of consensus” they are bound to lose that viability (p. 298). Based on many of the written submissions reviewed for this study, and comments from the City of Burnaby (reviewed in detail below), the original version of the RGS extended “beyond the bounds of consensus”. This dimension, along with Metro Vancouver’s history as a service provider/utility and the contested history of regional planning in the lower mainland, shape the degree to which a governance approach of the kind envisioned by proponents of new regionalism can provide a collaborative forum for a range of actors to influence regional decisions. The next section turns to the specific processes put in place to create the RGS beginning in 2005.

4.2.3. *Creating the RGS – Consultation and Process*

Beginning with the initial document in 2005, “Issues for the Livable Region Strategic Plan Review”, Metro Vancouver undertook an extensive process of consultation and review over 6 years to update the LRSP and create the RGS, which was adopted by the GVRD board in July of 2011. The next document put forward was called ‘Choosing Our Future: Options for Metro Vancouver’s Growth Management Strategy’, dated November 2007. This document was widely disseminated and feedback was solicited from: 1) the general public, 2) groups and agencies and 3) municipalities. The document is described as “...the starting point of a public consultation process to develop a new Regional Growth Strategy for Metro Vancouver to replace the Livable Region Strategic Plan.” (Metro Vancouver, 2007).

Subsequently, Metro Vancouver created draft versions of the RGS which were disseminated for public information and feedback from the same three stakeholder groups. In addition, Metro Vancouver held a number of public meetings, made presentations to municipal councils throughout the region, and made all documentation available on the internet where feedback was solicited for the initial report and the subsequent draft versions of the RGS. The consultation activities for the “Choosing Our Future” report and the RGS draft versions are outlined in detail in Appendix D, and are summarized in Table 4.4 below.

Table 4-3 Summary of Consultation Activities for the Regional Growth Strategy

Reports provided to public, municipalities, other levels of government, and groups or organizations for review and feedback	Public Meetings, Forums, Hearings, and/or workshops	Presentations to City Councils or Groups	Online
<p>Reports made available online and distributed at public meetings. 4,000 copies distributed</p> <p>All draft versions sent out to groups, organizations, other levels of government, and municipalities for feedback.</p>	<p>46 Public Meetings were held in total across the region.</p> <p>Many public meetings included groups discussions, Q&A, and questionnaires</p> <p>Focus groups were established</p> <p>A series of special workshops with government staff from all levels, business, community and non-profit representatives</p> <p>Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) comprised of municipal planners from localities met throughout the</p>	<p>Presentations to City Councils upon request</p> <p>Governments, First Nations, business and community groups invited to request presentations</p>	<p>Metro Vancouver website provided copies of all reports, background information, and invited written submissions</p> <p>Web discussion forum</p> <p>Online feedback form for draft versions</p> <p>'Ask a question' feature on the website</p>

	<p>process</p> <p>For the final draft a public hearing was held over six sessions</p>		
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The consultation process was extensive, and included a wide range of civic groups as well as members of the public. In addition, each iteration of the RGS went through a specific period of consultation between 2007 and 2010, culminating at last in a public hearing held by Metro Vancouver in 2011. Metro Vancouver summarized results from each round of public consultations into reports that were presented to the GVRD Board or the Land Use and Transportation Committee, and all of the reports are available on the Metro Vancouver website.¹⁹

Below is a summary of all the mechanisms through which members of the public, municipalities or civic groups could submit feedback to Metro Vancouver:

- Questionnaires from public meetings and workshops
- Online feedback
- Written submissions and comments for each version of the RGS
- Public hearing
- Technical Advisory Committee meetings (municipal planning staff only)

In addition, Metro Vancouver sent the initial reports and each draft version of the RGS to civic groups and each municipality in the region. These stakeholders were explicitly asked for feedback, and invited to make a written submission, each time. When asked how civic groups were informed or invited to provide feedback Chris, the Regional Development Division Manager at Metro Vancouver who oversaw much of the

¹⁹ It should also be noted that Mayor Derek Corrigan was the chair of the Land Use and Transportation Committee for much of the period during the RGS review.

consultation process, noted that there were two mechanisms; public advertising was used to invite groups and individuals to make submissions, and Metro Vancouver also knew of many groups that were interested, so would reach out to them specifically asking if they wanted to participate in the regional growth strategy. She also noted that many individuals who attended one or more public meetings held by Metro Vancouver subsequently made written submissions.

The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) was established under the direction of the GVRD board, who requested in 2005 that "...metro staff, go and work with municipal planners." (interview with Hugh – former Planning and Policy Manager with Metro Vancouver). The TAC met over the entire course of the RGS drafting and review period (2006 – 2010), and comprised planners from each local authority in Metro Vancouver. All member local authorities were invited to participate in the TAC, but discretion over who could attend, and whether to attend, was left with the municipalities. Alex, a former senior planner with the City of Burnaby, noted that the "...TAC was the body that the regional staff took everything to."

The following sections will outline in further detail the discussions and deliberation that took place at TAC meetings. Sufficed to say that the TAC was one of the primary mechanisms utilized by Metro Vancouver to draft each version of the RGS. With this as background, the following section turns to the research question: did the mechanisms and tactics described above facilitate a political forum, from the standpoint of new regionalism and Metro Vancouver's third role?

Chapter 5. Metro Vancouver as a Political Forum for Regional Land Use Planning

5.1. Decision-Making Influence – Burnaby and Civic Groups

As outlined above, municipalities, civic groups and other levels of government²⁰ were provided with each draft version of the RGS and invited to submit comment and feedback. In addition, each of these groups had an opportunity to participate in discussions regarding the RGS at one or more meetings held by Metro Vancouver, at presentations put on by Metro Vancouver staff, or through standing committees put together by Metro Vancouver. This study is focused on the question of whether, or how, local authorities and civic groups were able to collaborate and deliberate with one another in the creation of the RGS.²¹ One of Metro Vancouver's overall goals is to provide a political forum, and the optimistic perspective of new regionalism suggests that this governance approach should enable municipalities and civic groups to collaborate with one another and jointly undertake action on a regional scale.

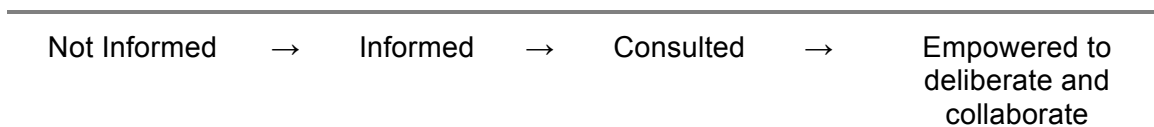
To answer this question, the focus here is on the City of Burnaby and the civic groups who participated in the process described in section 4.2.3. There are two

²⁰ Examples of other levels of government that made written submissions include provincial Ministries such as Environment, Agriculture and Lands, Public Works Canada, and agencies or Crown corporations such as Vancouver Coastal Health and BC Hydro. A comprehensive list is provided in Appendix A.

²¹ The focus on local authorities and CSOs, or non-governmental organizations, is based on the emphasis in the literature (Chapter 2) on the role of these two actors in collaboration at the regional scale under the new regionalism approach. For this reason, the involvement and influence of other levels of government was not reviewed in detail for the current study.

components to evaluating Metro Vancouver’s capacity to act as a regional forum, from the standpoint of new regionalism in the case of the RGS. In the first place – were civic groups and Burnaby legitimately consulted, whereby they were able to influence the process and outcome? And secondly, were civic groups and Burnaby able to collaborate and deliberate, at the higher end of the spectrum in Figure 5.1 below, described above in section 3 in the case of the RGS?

Figure 5-1 Decision-Making Influence



“Consulted” from the scale above implies that there was an opportunity to influence the outcome, as distinct from being “informed” about a given process or outcome. “Empowered to deliberate and collaborate” is at the higher end of the spectrum, potentially fulfilling the potential and possibility that new regionalism, and Metro Vancouver, can provide an effective forum for local authorities and civic groups to shape regional outcomes. There were ample opportunities for Burnaby, and civic groups, to provide written feedback regarding the RGS. The question is, was the feedback considered?

Appendix A outlines all of the civic groups or regional agencies that made written submissions at each stage of the RGS. In total, 74 groups or agencies made submissions, of whom 51 were non-governmental. Table 5-2 below indicates when written submissions were received from Burnaby or the civic groups that were interviewed for this study at each stage of the RGS. The table also outlines when, and how, written feedback from consultations was presented at the Board level at Metro Vancouver. It should be emphasized that the table only highlights the *written*

submissions and reports, and does not include any reference to the extent to which written submissions were referred to in meetings or discussions pertaining to the RGS.

Table 5-1 Written Submission Overview – RGS

	2007 “Choosing Our Future” Document	2008	2009 February Draft Version	2009 February Draft Version	2010 September Draft Version	2011 Final Version
Feedback	City of Burnaby Business Council of BC Urban Development Institute NAIOP	N/A	City of Burnaby submission in March and April Business Council of BC Dynamic Cities Project Livable Region Coalition Urban Development Institute	City of Burnaby Business Council of BC Urban Development Institute Burke Mountain Naturalists NAIOP	City of Burnaby Urban Development Institute NAIOP	N/A
Feedback Mechanism	3 reports to the Land Use and Transportation Committee – Feedback from Public Consultation	N/A	Summary of submissions to the Board	Summary of Program Results – Report to the Regional Planning Committee	Summary of public consultation activities & consultation issues – report to the Regional Planning Committee	Summary of public hearings to the Regional Board

In terms of influence over the RGS, the first point to note is that the RGS did change considerably over the period of review from 2006 – 2011. Although this is not a comprehensive list, the following are some key changes to the RGS that took place.

- In the overall goals – “Develop Complete and Resilient Communities” was changed to “Develop Complete Communities”
- In the initial version of the RGS in February 2009, whenever Regional Context Statements (RCS) are referred to, it notes that Metro Vancouver will “evaluate” RCS’s. All subsequent versions of the RGS state that Metro Vancouver will “accept” RCS’s
- An “Economic Areas” map from the original two versions of the RGS was removed. A map entitled “Industrial and Mixed Employment Areas” was added
- One of the strategies to “support” Translink’s preparation and implementation of a regional transportation system was changed to “acknowledge Translink’s mandate for the preparation and implementation of regional transit systems” (RGS Strategy 5.1)
- Significant changes to the definition and requirements for Mixed Employment Areas were made (further described below)
- The amendment process changed considerably over the course of RGS review (further described below)

Changes to the RGS are an indication that the process *may* have incorporated feedback from the consultations that were held, but these changes cannot be attributed to any particular written submission or group based on the document analysis alone. A submission by the BC Agricultural Council may be an exception in this regard. The submission from this CSO suggested that the focus in the RGS on agricultural food production did not take into account the range of economic activities that may take place on agricultural land, and how it was inappropriate for Metro Vancouver to prescribe a specific kind of agriculture (ie, food production). The submission suggests the replacement of the phrase “encourage its use for food production” with “strengthen the economic viability of the agricultural industry” (BC Agricultural Council, 2009). The subsequent version of the RGS contained the following revised strategy: “Strategy 2.3: Protect the supply of agricultural land and promote agricultural viability with an emphasis

on food production” (GVRD, November 2009). Thus, the change to the RGS *may* be attributable to the written submission from the BC Agricultural Council.

The interviews, however, provide a great deal of insight regarding the consideration and incorporation of suggestions and comments from municipalities and CSOs regarding the draft versions of the RGS. The next section outlines this dimension from the perspective of the City of Burnaby, and the following section outlines feedback from CSOs who were interviewed.

5.1.1. City of Burnaby – Decision-Making Influence

It needs to be emphasized that municipalities have a privileged position at Metro Vancouver (*vis a vis* CSOs) for the simple reason that they make up the institution’s constituent members and have full voting rights over final decisions. Metro Vancouver delivers services for the member local authorities, and Metro Vancouver’s role as a political forum during the RGS review was explicitly a forum for member localities. From an institutional structure standpoint, and given the history of Metro Vancouver, the influence by municipalities over the RGS should be considerable.

In terms of process, municipalities had access to a unique mechanism with which to shape and contribute to the RGS. The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) was created at the beginning of the review for the RGS, and comprised planning staff from all local authorities. Throughout the review process, the TAC was asked to review, make changes, and submit suggestions to the Metro Vancouver board regarding the RGS.²²

²² However, one former planner with the City of Burnaby noted that oftentimes they would be provided with a copy of the final report going to the Metro Vancouver board, and it would include elements or changes that had not been discussed at the TAC.

The meetings held by the TAC were long (entire days), and consisted of detailed review of the RGS. The perspective of Metro Vancouver planning staff was that nothing in the RGS would have been possible without the explicit support from the municipalities. A former regional planning manager (Chris) who oversaw and participated in many of the meetings referenced one instance when it became clear that the RGS was not going any further in its current form. The Metro Vancouver Board instructed staff to go back to the TAC and “work out the differences among the planning directors”. In that instance, Chris noted that:

So we took that task very seriously. And we worked, hundreds of hours. ...sometimes the meetings went for, we might've worked all day some times, but half a day at least most times, and I think we met about 11 or 12 times. And so...we ended up going policy by policy, and started right from the beginning. ...a lot of important adjusting going on with metro staff and the planning directors, to a point where the planning directors were happy with it, or mostly happy with it. You know, you never get 100% obviously. So there were those tensions, but we had worked really hard, and had come to the best document that we could get to. And then we brought that back to that committee, and that committee said okay, good enough, so then we went back out again.

Metro Vancouver subsequently distributed the revised draft of the RGS to municipalities for their comment and acceptance. The quote above distinguishes two mechanisms available to member local authorities. Planning directors from throughout the region had the opportunity to be directly involved in reviewing the RGS “policy by policy” via the TAC. Secondly, municipalities were provided with each draft version of the RGS for their response, comment and an indication of their acceptance or rejection of each version.

Of all the written submissions from municipalities regarding the draft versions of the RGS, those from the City of Burnaby were among the most extensive. The written

submission from March of 2009 outlined 12 specific recommendations, and the January 2010 submission outlines 37 specific recommendations for changes to the RGS (City of Burnaby, January 2010, p. 4). Planners from the City of Burnaby were especially concerned with the regulatory approach embodied in the RGS, and specifically the amendment process. The city raised these concerns through the TAC process and also in the city's formal written submissions. In reference to the TAC process, Burnaby's written submission in March of 2009 notes the following:

This process (the TAC process) with municipal staff has allowed the Region to further refine the content of the *draft RGS*, but from our view, has not achieved the desired '*mutually agreeable approach*' nor a '*general municipal consensus*' on the appropriate regulatory framework pursued in the *draft RGS*, as envisioned in the City's 2008 March submission and pursued by staff at the TAC table. (City of Burnaby, March 2009, p. 5-6)

This section clearly outlines the two mechanisms available to municipalities to influence the RGS: 1) via the TAC and 2) via written submission. This report also outlines Burnaby's concern with the increased regulatory approach, referencing the perceived lack of an "appropriate regulatory framework". The written submissions from the City of Burnaby regarding the February and November versions of the RGS in 2009 both emphasize the city's concern with the "regulatory framework" of the RGS. The city's March 2009 submission suggests that the "...directions, guidelines and actions (in the RGS) should be recommended, rather than proposed as a 'regional regulatory' approach" (City of Burnaby, March 2009).

Despite the concerns raised by the City of Burnaby and others, the RGS never did revert to the voluntary or aspirational approach from the previous LRSP. However, much of the wording in the RGS was adjusted to become *less* regulatory. For example,

whereas the original version called for Metro Vancouver's *evaluation* of all regional context statements, all subsequent versions call for Metro Vancouver to *accept* regional context statements, ostensibly leaving the evaluation of RCS's to the municipalities themselves. In one specific section pertaining to Goal 5: Support Sustainable Transportation Choices, a specific strategy requiring municipalities to ensure the movement of goods through roads identified on a map is removed, along with the Regional Roads identified on the map. Instead, in the final version of the RGS, municipalities are asked to "*self-identify* routes on a map for the efficient movement of goods." (emphasis added - Metro Vancouver, January 2011, Strategy 5.2.3, p. 55)

In addition, because there was such concern for the added regulation in the RGS, Metro Vancouver was compelled to further define, refine, and outline in further detail the amendment process for the RGS. Chris mentioned how she and the CAO of Metro Vancouver, Johnny Carline, were definitely advocating for a more regulatory plan. She states that in this context the "...politicians are saying if you want a more regulatory plan then you have to have a better amendment process, so then, you know we worked with Victoria to get the amendments to the planning legislation." Amendments to the legislation was required because the *Local Government Act* did not contain any amendment procedures for Regional Growth Strategies. Metro Vancouver staff subsequently worked with the province to develop the amendment legislation, which took a year to complete (Interview, former Regional Development Division Manager, Metro Vancouver).

Nonetheless, in terms of influence, the written submission from the City of Burnaby in October 2010 indicates that, from their perspective, the majority of the

multiple concerns raised in previous submissions and during the TAC process were ultimately addressed.

To respond to the numerous identified concerns associated with a significantly expanded Metro Vancouver regulatory role in land use matters across the region raised in the response to the 2009 November draft, the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC - generally municipal planning directors) was invited to work with regional staff on this matter. Specifically, they sought to address what should be the appropriate spheres of regional interest versus local interest within the RGS and how this should be reflected in the defined implementation process. Their challenge was to strike a balance between achieving legitimate regional interests and strategic objectives, while providing for desired local diversity, autonomy, and discretion. A working group from TAC, including representation from TransLink, was formed and met during the period from April 2010 to the end of 2010 August. The resulting implementation framework in the September 2010 draft has been significantly altered and is more in keeping with the City's previous two submissions. Amendments have also been made to the contents of the *draft RGS* that address many of the issues previously identified by the City. Notwithstanding, there are City issues remaining that have not been adequately responded to in the updated draft. (City of Burnaby, October 2010, p. 7)

The section above is significant for this study, because it further corroborates the instance Chris referred to (outlined above) whereby the RGS reached an impasse at the committee level, when the TAC was asked to review it "policy by policy" and come up with a revised implementation framework and amendment process. The draft version of the RGS after this summer session (April 2010 to the end of August 2010) contains considerable changes to the implementation framework and the amendment procedure. These changes cannot be attributed to the City of Burnaby alone. However, the phrase from the quote above whereby: "many of the issues previously identified by the City" indicates that staff from the City of Burnaby felt a large number of concerns raised had been addressed.

One such concern that can be more specifically attributed to Burnaby pertains to permitted uses of lands designated as “Conservation and Recreation”. The November 2009 draft of the RGS includes a requirement under Strategy 3.1.4 that municipalities are to create Regional Context Statements that “do not include residential, commercial and office, institutional and industrial or other uses that are incompatible with conservation and recreation uses in areas that are designated Conservation and Recreation” (Metro Vancouver, November 2009, p. 33). In their submission in 2009, the City of Burnaby requests that:

...the draft is amended to specifically allow municipally sponsored indoor recreation and cultural activities in areas having a Conservation and Recreation designation, and that the draft is amended to allow limited service commercial uses or institutional uses on Conservation and Recreation lands (City of Burnaby, January 2010).

In the subsequent version of the RGS the entire statement about not including certain types of uses is removed from Strategy 3.1.4. Instead, the language indicates that municipalities are to adopt RCS’s that are “generally consistent” with a number of generic uses (Metro Vancouver, January 2011, p. 34).

The City of Burnaby made other recommendations that aligned with concerns expressed by other municipalities which clearly influenced and altered the RGS. One of the significant changes to the RGS was the removal of the economic areas map, and the addition of the term ‘mixed employment areas’. A specific map titled “economic areas” outlining specific parcels that could only be used for industrial purposes was changed to an “industrial and mixed employment areas” map. Chris noted that this change was based on feedback from the municipalities, noting that: “...we did try for a strong first

policy in one of those draft plans. ...taking anything that allowed industrial at that point, to make them industrial designated areas.” However, she notes that:

...all of a sudden we were looking like we were taking away development rights from land that had allowed office, and industrial. So there was really big pushback. So what evolved out of that conversation was something called mixed employment areas. ...the lands that were more or less just industrial, they drew a line around them, and the ones that allowed mixed employment office and sometimes retailing, they drew a line around those, and those became mixed employment areas. We weren't thrilled about mixed employment areas...

There was a strong push by Burnaby and other municipalities to ensure that existing development plans, that included infill development in industrial areas, would be permitted under the RGS. Strategy 2.2 from the RGS September 2010 version contained the following added statement: “allow low density infill/expansion based on currently accepted local plans and policies in Mixed Employment Areas” (Metro Vancouver, 2010). The written submission from the City of Burnaby in 2009 requests that: “Amendments are required to clarify that the regional designation ‘Mixed Employment areas’ would allow for development consistent with the guidelines and uses within the city’s OCP (Official Community Plan) (City of Burnaby, January 2010).

Regarding the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), senior planners from the City of Burnaby expressed some degree of frustration. Alex, a former level planner, noted that “...we would go and meet, we’d have all these meetings...and hash stuff out over 2-3 weeks, and we would compromise in the interests of getting this thing moving ahead....and we would arrive at an agreement, and I’d go to the next meeting, and we’d be back here” (gestures to indicate back further than when they’d started). It was his perspective that the TAC would come to agreement on various items, but then Metro

Staff would take the revisions to “whoever they reported to” and would be told no, those revisions were not possible. Alex noted further that:

TAC was the body that the regional staff took everything to. But it was sort of a generally, some cases it wasn't even a vote, it was more, 'this is what's going to the regional board'. And it's a discussion paper. I remember sometimes saying well, how can that be? this is the first time we've seen it.

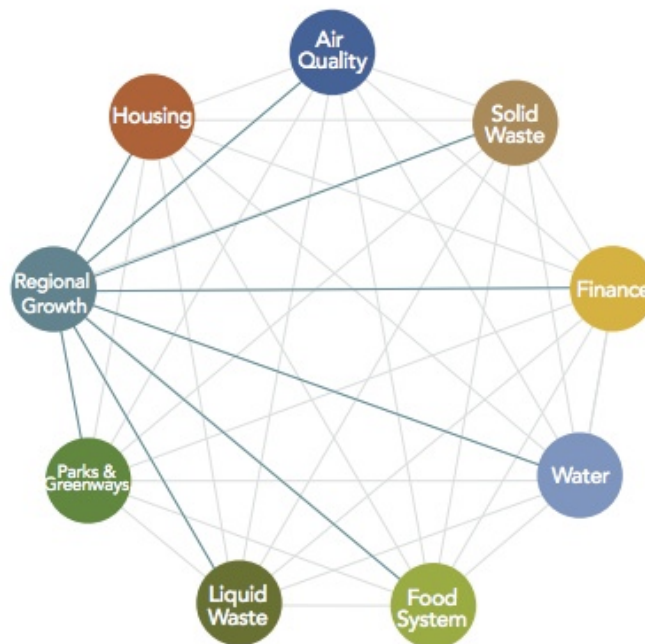
When questioned further, however, Alex qualified his statements further, stating that he did not want to give the impression that the TAC “agree on white, and it came back black.” He stated that it was “always a different shade of grey, as an analogy”, and a constant loop, whereby the TAC would make tweaks, but the subsequent version would come back a little different. Alex noted that the discrepancy between discussions held at the TAC and subsequent draft versions of the RGS could be attributed to changes at the Metro Vancouver committee level, by other municipalities in their written submissions, or by the Chief Operating Officer of Metro Vancouver at the time, Johnny Carline. In reference to the TAC, another senior planner at Metro Vancouver (Hugh) commented that: “...they met doggedly to try and hammer through the more serious issues. All very committed.” However, in reference to the goals of the senior staff at Metro Vancouver, and the CAO Johnny Carline:

...he was looking for a sustainability model in which one would fit a number of different plans; a solid waste plan, a liquid waste plan, a water plan, a parks plan, a regional growth strategy. So as the philosophy evolved and the ability to produce all of these plans evolved, then it affected what was being launched in the RGS. That slowed things down, it tended to make it quite frustrating.

Here, the focus on sustainability and the regulatory approach taken by Metro Vancouver for the revision of the RGS appears to have frustrated the process to some extent. The plans referred to above are all meant as an overall network, or suite, of plans

within an overall focus on sustainability. This network of plans, whereby the RGS comprises one of 9 plans focusing on sustainability, is outlined in Figure 4 below.

Figure 5-2 Regional Growth Strategy Linkages to Other Plans²³



The emphasis on sustainability, and requirement for the RGS to fit within this network of plans, may have contributed to the extended and frustrating process referred to by Alex, Brian, and Hugh. The final version of the RGS describes the image in Figure 4 as follows: “Metro Vancouver’s Regional Growth Strategy is one plan among a suite of interconnected management plans developed around Metro Vancouver’s Sustainability Framework.” (Metro Vancouver, January 2011, p. 3). In their written submission, the Business Council of BC highlights a possible difficulty with this approach, observing that “...the conceptual positioning of the RGS as just one of a ‘suite’ of plans mandated by

²³ Metro Vancouver. (January 2011). *Regional Growth Strategy*, p. 3.

Metro Vancouver within its SRI (Sustainable Region Initiative) framework is inappropriate for such a far-reaching document.” (Business Council of BC, June 2009, p. 2). Further reinforcing this point, many of the comments and suggestions brought up in the written submissions by both municipalities and CSOs are considerably far-reaching, and extend beyond the purview of the RGS as one of a “suite of plans”. In their written submission regarding the “Choosing our Future” document in 2007, the City of Burnaby requested that the draft RGS should include the following issues, in addition to the eight that were raised in the initial report: 1) social issues, 2) complete communities, 3) peak oil, 4) transportation choices, and 5) food security (City of Burnaby, March 2008). It is difficult to conceive how this broad range of issues could be addressed in a growth strategy that is intended as one of 9 plans; many of the issues and strategies in the RGS, and raised in written submissions, extend across many of the plans from Figure 4.

The Business Council of BC suggested that the RGS should occupy a more prominent position in Metro Vancouver’s hierarchy of plans (Business Council of BC, June 2009, p. 2). Without doing so, it was never possible for the RGS to incorporate many of the suggestions raised by the City of Burnaby in their original submission, or those raised by some CSOs.

Nonetheless, regarding the whole process, both Alex and Brian (former planners with the City of Burnaby) commented further that:

Brian: But I think at the end right, it was a lengthy process, and in the end each member municipality had the ability to sort of comment, not only on your own municipality but it was on the regional growth strategy.

Alex: So it's a success from that standpoint, I mean they got it through.

Brian: Yeah as Alex said you know going through the process was a real grind. But in the end to get that consensus, and the approval, I mean I think that deserves some credit in the end.

Changes to the amendment process, and the extensive review conducted by the TAC in the summer of 2010, illustrate a central challenge of the RGS in terms of providing a mechanism for influence and collaboration on a regional scale, and between both municipalities and CSOs. In terms of the amendment process, Chris noted that there were “two sides of the coin. There were those who say no, you know, it’s more red tape...and then on the other side there were people saying ‘what are you doing with this amendment process, there shouldn’t be any amendments, this is it, the line’s drawn”. Although the TAC was given extensive discretion to review the RGS between April and August in 2010, this process might have compromised the extent to which CSOs were able to influence the RGS. Bill, a senior policy advisor with the Urban Development Institute, noted that:

...basically what happened that summer is metro met with planners from across the region in closed door meetings to hash out what this thing's going to look like at the end of the day. And then when they came up with the agreement they went very quickly to public hearing, and you know, boom, it came out. ...when they came out of that summer, they had that agreement and they weren’t going to jeopardize that agreement.

From this account, it appears that the municipal planners involved in the TAC process were given considerable discretion over specific policies and the final version of the RGS. However, their influence was limited to the existing framework within which the RGS was intended, and constrained within the overall focus on sustainability. Further, recommendations made by the TAC were still subject to change and alteration by Metro Vancouver staff. This perspective is further reflected in comments from Hugh, speaking about the involvement in municipal planning directors in the process:

...there's elements of top down, bottom up. So, some of the things percolate up from below, the municipalities have a lot of control, and there's some things that come down from the top in terms of consistency, where the board makes some kind of decision that seems to be applicable across all areas.

It is evident that local authorities played a key role and, in terms of the scale of influence from Table 2-1 above, were consulted at a minimum. In fact, the concern of municipalities over the regulatory approach taken in the RGS substantially influenced the final outcome. It can be concluded that local authorities were more than consulted, they were given some degree of final decision making authority over the content of the RGS, even if they were not able to influence the overall direction of the strategy or the focus on sustainability. The next question is whether local authorities were empowered to collaborate and deliberate with one another, at the higher end of the spectrum. Before answering this question, the next section focuses on CSOs. Did the extensive influence exerted by the local authorities compromise the extent to which CSOs were able to influence and shape the plan? The quote above from Bill, the senior policy advisor with the Urban Development Institute, suggests that any input or changes had to be approved or vetted by the TAC, and that after the summer session of 2010 no changes to the RGS were possible. The next section focuses specifically on the influence by CSOs on the RGS.

5.1.2. *Decision-Making Influence – Civil Society Organizations (CSOs)*

Public agencies, different levels of government, and civil society organizations (CSOs) all had an opportunity to submit written feedback to Metro Vancouver on the RGS for each draft version. Chris, a former manager with Metro Vancouver, noted that Metro Vancouver reached out to CSOs via public media and also by directly contacting

groups and organizations they knew were interested in “these issues”. She also noted that many CSOs would attend one of the many evening workshops or sessions they held at the outset, and make submissions based on what they heard. In total, fifty-one CSOs made formal written submissions to Metro Vancouver. Representatives from the following CSOs were interviewed for this study:

- National Association of Office and Industrial Properties (NAIOP)
- Dynamic Cities Project
- Burke Mountain Naturalists
- Livable Region Coalition
- Business Council of BC
- Urban Development Institute

Over the course of the process to draft the RGS, it is clear that the primary formal mechanism available to CSOs to influence the outcome was through written submissions. Although some CSOs attended the public meetings that were held at the initial stages of the process, these meetings were primarily intended for members of the public at large. However, the interviews revealed that some CSOs utilized their existing connections and relationships to lobby for broader, ongoing issues, and also that some of the groups did not, in fact, expect their written submission to have a direct impact on the RGS. For example, Graeme from NAIOP commented that:

...by the time we get the opportunity to give input, the plan is fully baked. They need to get 21 municipalities to sign off on this thing, and once they've signed off on it, it goes out to us for comment. And basically, unless our comments are earth-shattering, nothing changes.

To a certain extent the RGS was used as a forum for CSOs to raise broader regional issues, as opposed to impacting specific outcomes in the RGS. Bryn, from Dynamic Cities, commented that:

...I think it was Chris who encouraged me to submit something in writing. ...it was more or less kind of a regurgitation of the work that we'd been doing. And so, that letter, could've been written in response to any of ten different plans. Like frankly what they produced didn't matter all that much. ...whatever it was that they produced, we woulda said okay it could be improved in this way.

Bryn noted that Chris had been to a presentation that he'd given for one of Metro Vancouver's sustainability breakfasts, and also had him come and present to the "environment committee or something". Also, that Andrea Reimer (Vancouver City Councillor and Metro Vancouver Board Member) was on the same committee and, to him, they both seemed to think that it was well received and that representatives from other municipalities were interested in a narrative around resiliency. It was his perception that based on positive feedback from that first presentation, they invited him back to give a presentation to the land use planning committee. Input from Dynamic Cities was thereby directed more towards overall awareness of the implications surrounding peak oil and climate change, as opposed to the specifics regarding the RGS itself. He shared the notion that his message required radical overhaul of the entire system to be taken seriously, and he understood that was not going to happen as part of this process.

Further, his invitation to present to Metro Vancouver was very much based on the discussions and issues which he'd been lobbying for some time, stating that: "...we were trying to influence thought leaders and urban planners, and so I was giving lots of presentations to different groups. Federal groups, government groups, environmental groups, business groups, basically anybody who would listen..." His involvement with the RGS was at least partially motivated by his desire to raise awareness surrounding peak oil. Bryn noted that "...it was an opportunity to say what would our work look like through the lens of our actual local plan."

Involvement from the Burke Mountain Naturalists was similar. Elaine commented that they didn't feel the municipality of Coquitlam was doing a very good job of protecting the riparian corridors, and "the fact that there was a regional growth strategy provided us a vehicle to raise awareness about that". Elaine also had the opportunity to present before Metro Vancouver committees on a range of issues in which the Burke Mountain Naturalists are involved, but she did not think she'd given a presentation to any committee on the RGS specifically. In terms of the issues raised by her organization in their written submission, and the degree to which they influenced the RGS, she noted that:

...sometimes you know it's not the decision that matters so much as just getting everyone's antennae up that this is an issue. Right. And then it becomes an issue that people are aware of by the time the next municipal election rolls around. It's interesting, you know cause sometimes you can have what seems to be like an apparent loss on an issue, but actually it's just the first kick at the can. And you're making everyone aware. And you're building that level of awareness. And eventually if you persist you can get a victory.

Both the Burke Mountain Naturalists and Bryn, from Dynamic Cities, had been engaged in discussions amongst their network of peers regarding regional issues for some time. They both viewed the RGS, to some extent, as an avenue to raise awareness regarding issues with which they were already engaged. The issues raised by Dynamic Cities in their written submission do not appear in any substantive way in any of the versions of the RGS, though this is not surprising given Bryn's expectations and the nature of the issues he was looking to address. The Burke Mountain Naturalists, however, did raise some specific issues with the RGS in addition to broad regional issues. The group's written submission requests more strategies to address greenhouse gas emissions, and suggests the introduction of the "ecological footprint" concept. It is

not evident that these issues were addressed or changed in the subsequent version of the RGS.

More specifically, the submission from the Burke Mountain Naturalists requests that some of the areas in Coquitlam identified as “General Urban” in the November 2009 draft of the RGS be converted to a “Conservation and Recreation” designation, and that the greenway corridors identified in the tri-cities area are inadequate. Changes to the Conservation and Recreation designated lands do not appear to address the area identified by the organization. The final version of the RGS does include an additional greenway connection in Coquitlam that appears to be along a corridor identified by the group. Despite this minor adjustment, the majority of concerns raised by the Burke Mountain Naturalists do not appear to have been addressed. However, this was not a significant concern for Elaine, for the reasons mentioned above.

Returning to the NAIOP, despite his perception that the RGS was “fully-baked” by the time it was distributed for comment, Graeme noted that one significant issue raised by his organization was, in fact, addressed in the final version of the document. The NAIOP was very concerned about the designation of certain areas as “industrial” that were within close proximity to transit corridors. They suggest changing the designation of these areas to “mixed employment”. Although the final version of the RGS did not actually change all of the areas originally designated as “industrial” along transit corridors (although some were), the plan does enable municipalities to re-designate land from mixed employment or industrial to general urban if the site is located on the edge of an industrial or mixed employment area and the developable portion of the site will be within 150m of the transit network (Metro Vancouver, 2011, p. 59). Graeme noted that this addition represents a “significant win for NAIOP and our members”.

It should be noted, however, that this concern over industrial land designations, and the addition of the “mixed employment” land use designation in the RGS was a concern shared by many municipalities. This change cannot be directly, or solely, attributed to the NAIOP. Nonetheless, the documentary review and the interviews did reveal changes to the RGS that are aligned with issues raised in written submissions from CSOs. Many CSOs raised a broad range of regional issues that were far beyond the scope of the RGS, such as those raised by the Dynamic Cities Project. Understandably many of these issues were not addressed. More specific concerns, however, that were directly targeted at the specific content or specific policies in the RGS, are in line with some of the changes to the RGS, such as those raised by the Burke Mountain Naturalists and the NAIOP mentioned previously. Table 5.2 outlines some examples of changes to the RGS that at least *align* with recommendations from CSO written submissions.

Table 5-2 Changes to the RGS and related written submissions²⁴

Change to the Regional Growth Strategy	Civic group submission
Additional strategies concerning natural features, reducing GHGs, and climate change added.	David Suzuki Foundation
"Protect the region's supply of agricultural land and encourage its use for food production" changed to: "Protect the supply of agricultural land and promote agricultural viability with an emphasis on food production"	BC Agricultural Council
Strategy 2.2: Reference to 'Economic Areas map' removed - Map retitled "Industrial and Mixed Employment Areas". Also changed/added: "Municipalities will include policies that support appropriate economic development in Urban Centres, FTD Areas, Industrial and Mixed Employment Areas."	Urban Development Institute

²⁴ Again, it should be emphasized that these changes to the RGS cannot be directly attributed to the written submissions that are outlined. This table is simply meant to indicate the type of changes to the RGS that appear to align with specific concerns that were raised in written submissions from CSOs.

Strategy 2.3: added: "Work with the ALC to protect the region's agricultural land base"

David Suzuki Foundation

"Develop complete, inclusive communities..." changed to: "Develop healthy and complete communities..."

Fraser Health Authority

In addition, the second submission from the Urban Development Institute (UDI) in February of 2010 indicates a perception that some of the issues raised in their previous submission had been addressed. The submission states that they are "pleased to see" Metro Vancouver adopt their previous recommendation to allow more substantive office uses in frequent transit development corridors, and then goes on to raise a number of issues that remained unaddressed (Urban Development Institute, 2010). Further, the final written submission from UDI in October 2010 indicates they are pleased that the "advice from UDI and other stakeholders and local governments has been reflected", specifically that Metro Vancouver had:

- Removed the restrictive language in the previous draft related to industrial uses and ancillary uses in industrial areas
- Introduced some flexibility where industrial areas are near transit stations to allow higher density mixed uses
- Removed section 6.2.3, so local governments will have the opportunity to develop RCSs in their OCPs before the new RGS applies to their jurisdiction **section 6.2.3 required that any amendments to OCPs would need to demonstrate consistency with the RGS or a municipality's RCS. The final version simply requires changes to OCPs to be "generally consistent" with the RGS*
- Provided more flexibility to municipalities in the new draft of the RGS, so municipal RCSs must be "generally consistent", not "consistent" (as stated in the previous draft) with the RGS (Urban Development Institute, October 2010, p. 1)

At the end of the letter, UDI indicates that “Many of our recommendations and those of others have been incorporated into the draft plan.” Nonetheless, many concerns raised by UDI in their original submissions remained unaddressed, the most notable of these being the designation of some lands around transit corridors as industrial.²⁵ Further, the submission raises a significant concern UDI had expressed previously, that the RGS did not include any actual mechanisms to support or achieve the living densities that are contemplated. This type of concern can be compared with the more regional or ‘global’ issues raised by Dynamic Cities and the Burke Mountain Naturalists – issues that are beyond the scope of the RGS. So while all three groups raised a number of issues that were beyond the scope of the RGS, there is strong evidence that many specific recommendations from CSOs were addressed in the RGS.

The Livable Region Coalition focused heavily on the need to reduce greenhouse gases in the RGS, their desire to oppose roadway expansions, and to develop a much more extensive transit network. However, both roads and transit are beyond Metro Vancouver’s jurisdiction.²⁶ Further, the coalition recommended a return to the Growth Concentration Area concept from the previous LRSP. Although the RGS did change and eventually include the need to reduce greenhouse gases, it does not include strong targets and, similar to the issue raised by UDI pertaining to density targets, there are no direct mechanisms available to Metro Vancouver through the RGS to work towards the goals that are outlined. In some ways, input from CSOs was similar to the input from municipalities. Certain specific policies were added, changed, and removed, but the

²⁵ Though a case could be made that the change to the RGS allowing municipalities to alter lands designated as industrial to mixed-employment or general urban does address this concern.

²⁶ Provincial highways are under the jurisdiction of the Province and the Major Road Network in the Metro Vancouver region is under Translink’s jurisdiction.

overall focus of the RGS, and the implementation tools that were outlined, were not changed in significant ways. To put it another way, the normative goals of the RGS did not appear to change based on the input from CSOs.

This dimension of the RGS was particularly frustrating for the UDI. While the RGS aspired to take on broad regional issues such as sustainable growth, supporting sustainable transportation, and protecting the region's natural assets, the plan was restricted to the regulatory framework within which Metro Vancouver operates, the sustainability framework, and the necessity to link together with Metro Vancouver's other regional plans (outlined in section 4.2 above). Dynamic Cities and the Burke Mountain Naturalists seemed satisfied with the opportunity to raise awareness surrounding some of these issues, but UDI was especially frustrated with a plan directed towards sweeping, holistic regional issues without the tools or capacity to achieve new goals. Regarding the lack of tools to achieve density targets specifically, the senior policy advisor with UDI stated that:

...on the one hand they were being quite draconian in terms of freezing land. But that's really easy, that's the easy part. Where basically metro had no teeth at all, was, okay we froze all this land, now we're going to basically require densification along these corridors. ...that's where...there was certainly some concern, which was, you're going to freeze all this land, but you're going to say some nice words about the need for densification. But you actually don't have the powers to compel municipalities to do those things. And it was sort of like we got the worst of all worlds.

To Bill, the RGS endeavoured to take on some significant regional challenges, but, without the capacity to do so in a comprehensive way, resulted in "the worst of all worlds". Nonetheless, in terms of input and influence, Bill felt that they had access and influence over the process commenting that they had meetings with metro staff, and in fact had a liaison committee with Metro Vancouver. His perspective in this regard, in

addition to the comments in the written submissions from UDI, support the notion that UDI influenced the RGS at least pertaining to specific policies and the implementation mechanisms.

The Business Council of BC (BCBC) shared concerns that were similar to those of the UDI. As mentioned above in section 5.1.1, the BCBC suggested that the RGS should occupy a “more prominent position” in Metro Vancouver’s hierarchy of plans, and as one of a “suite” of plans would be implicitly limited in the degree to which the goals outlined in the plan could be achieved. Two primary issues raised in the written submission by the BCBC are the “preservationist” focus in the RGS, in the context of very likely considerable future growth, and what they perceive to be “scant attention to the region’s existing economic structure” without any steps to achieve future prosperity (Business Council of BC, February 2010, p. 2). Neither of these issues, nor many of the others raised in the BCBC written submission, appear to have been addressed in any kind of substantive way in any of the RGS versions. In all three of their submissions, BCBC requested the addition of the term “prosperous” to the overall goal in the RGS strategy to support a sustainable economy. And, similarly to the UDI, BCBC recommends dealing with the preservation of industrial land as part of a more comprehensive overall economic strategy, rather than implementing an industrial land reserve in isolation.

Like Bill from the Urban Development Institute, Jock did feel that the BCBC had sufficient access and opportunity to comment on and influence the RGS. For the BCBC it was not typical to get involved in regional issues, as they are a provincial organization. However, Jock noted that the “jurisdictional fragmentation in metro Vancouver is mirrored in the business community”, so BCBC gets involved in regional matters from

time to time under pressure from some of their members. With the RGS, the BCBC provided written submissions and also attended Metro Vancouver meetings. His frustration was with the limited regulatory framework and the normative goals within which the RGS was constrained. Much like the broad, holistic, and more aspirational suggestions raised by Dynamic Cities, the Burke Mountain Naturalists, the Livable Region Coalition and the UDI, the normative suggestions from BCBC are not the sort of issues that Metro Vancouver was in a position to address in the RGS. Jock expressed his frustration that the RGS was taking on some broad regional issues in a piecemeal way, without the capacity or mandate to take on the desired goals outlined in the plan. In terms of their influence and outcomes from their efforts, Jock stated:

...our main method of trying to influence things was to prepare written material. Send it to the board, the metro board, not just to the bureaucracy, and then the mayor, and so we did have a lobbying and advocacy effort around the regional growth strategy...we certainly raised the profile of these concerns within the business community.

It wasn't very effective. And the reason it was ineffective gets to the fundamental problem in this region. ...there is no layer of elected political leaders who's day to day job and preoccupation is the health and vibrancy of metro Vancouver. ...the metro Vancouver bureaucracy is hemmed in...they have very clear restrictions on what they can do. They've been told, both explicitly and implicitly for 20 years, to keep their nose out of anything to do with economics and business. It's the dysfunctional structure that they're working within, where you take an integrated, interdependent region, and you say you've got all these grand goals about livability...and then you don't give them the tools or the mandate to actually approach it.

Jock's comments reinforce the significance of Metro Vancouver's history, the sustainability framework, and the regulatory framework for the discussions and consultation that took place for the RGS. He noted that the issues that the Business Council of BC is interested in are simply not within the "core competency" of Metro Vancouver despite the broad implications for business and industry of the RGS and the

goals that are outlined. The comments above from Bill and Jock were reinforced by Mayor Corrigan, though the Mayor was much more supportive of the whole process. He stated that:

You know it's not an aggressive plan. It's more a passive plan. And I don't say that in a derogatory way. I say it in that it recognized that there were certain things to be protected. Not certain things to be advanced.

His comment strikes at the core of the issue raised by Jock and Bill. They would likely argue that the range and scope of issues addressed in the RGS necessitated policies and strategies that should have "to be advanced", and that a passive plan resulted in the "worst of all worlds". For these two CSOs, Metro Vancouver's institutional structure greatly frustrated the degree to which the RGS could serve as a forum to discuss regional issues in a substantive way. Both Chris and Mayor Corrigan referred to the need to drive consensus amongst the member authorities, and the Mayor emphasized the degree to which the plan was intended to create broad restrictions without requiring specific policies or actions on the part of municipalities. Andrew, from the Livable Region Coalition, commented that the need for consensus resulted in the "...weakest, weeniest statements, that say as little as possible." The "passive" nature of the plan, and the focus on land restrictions that were within the purview of the member localities, evidently frustrated the UDI, BCBC, and the Livable Region Coalition to a considerable extent.

However, Jock did feel that the BCBC was able to raise the profile of many concerns within the business community. This was a common theme for all of the CSOs that were interviewed; to discuss the plan across their existing connections and relationships. Jock noted that they went out to various Chambers of Commerce and met with what he would call the grassroots business voice in the region. They also met with

some of the local councillors and mayors. The original submission from the NAIOP indicated their intention to approach municipalities directly concerning specific land parcels that might be affected by the plan. Bryn, from Dynamic Cities, noted that at the time of the RGS he'd been "carrying along parallel conversations" with some of the planning staff who were involved with the RGS. Elaine from the Burke Mountain Naturalists commented that "...the fact that there was a regional growth strategy provided us a vehicle to raise awareness..." She noted also that the RGS, and Metro Vancouver in general, can provide two mechanisms to advocate for issues of concern. The Burke Mountain Naturalists could lobby directly to their local city council in Coquitlam and raise the same concerns at the Metro Vancouver board level.

Mayor Derek Corrigan raised the same point when questioned about the degree to which the Metro Vancouver board heard directly from CSOs. He commented that CSOs could "layer their approach" by dealing with their local governments and advancing their arguments on "two fronts". He mentioned the Burke Mountain Naturalists, who could lobby both Metro Vancouver and Coquitlam, and also the Burns Bog preservation society, who "...has the council in Delta advocating for them" and that they would come forward to Metro Vancouver with issues that impact them but have broader implications for the region. Further, that:

...they had the ability to lobby local governments, to put the issue on in the level of councils, and to bring the issues to metro. And so it was one that the mosaic helped them throughout, because it gave them double empowerment...

Bill from the UDI also noted that they struck a coalition between the UDI, the BCBC and the BC Chamber of Commerce to work together and address the RGS, and they sent letters out directly to municipalities raising their concerns with the plan. The

NAIOP also indicated that they lobbied municipalities directly about their concern over mixed-employment areas. The multiple avenues of advocacy referenced by Mayor Corrigan were thereby available to CSOs in the region, though the groups interviewed were organizations with a long history and strong connections throughout the region. Elaine commented that some groups, who were established more recently or may not have knowledge of Metro Vancouver, would not likely be able to utilize the mechanisms available as effectively.

Overall, it appears that CSOs leveraged their existing networks and relationships to raise issues with which they were already concerned. Further, that they did have some degree of influence over specific strategies in the RGS. However, CSO frustrations with the RGS pertain to the regulatory framework within which the RGS was created, which limited the mechanisms and tools available for pursuing the plan's goals, and also their inability to influence the overall direction and goals of the plan as a whole. Nonetheless, the CSOs interviewed did feel that the RGS provided them with multiple avenues with which they could raise awareness regarding certain issues amongst their peers. In the next section the notion of collaboration is addressed. Did the RGS enable municipalities such as Burnaby and CSOs from throughout the region to collaborate and deliberate with one another?

5.2. Collaboration and Deliberation in the case of the Regional Growth Strategy

By way of reminder, it is important to begin with an outline of what is being referred to by the terms "collaboration" or "deliberation". In their study of new regionalism Kubler and Schwab (2007) note the "heterarchical" nature of network governance at the

regional scale. In their study, deliberation refers to the fact that urban regions have a high number of different actors and interdependencies, making decision-making through consensus, argument and deliberation more important than through majority voting or bargaining (Kubler and Schwab, 2007, p. 479). Oliver Diabla (2013) comments that since the 1990s scholars of new regionalism such as David Rusk, Hank Savitch, and Ron Vogel have focused on "...forms of metropolitan governance that combine hierarchical forms of strategic decision making with horizontal cooperation and coordination" (p. 13). Did the process to create the RGS combine "hierarchical forms of strategic decision making with horizontal cooperation"?

The combination of hierarchical decision-making together with horizontal cooperation is rendered even more challenging when the intention is to include local government authorities, public agencies, and civic groups. In the case of the RGS this tension is made very clear in the quotes below – one from the Mayor of Burnaby, the other from UDI, one of the CSOs consulted as part of the process.

Derek: ...there were all kinds of discussions, because we went through all kinds of smaller meetings, you know, dialogues we called them. Opportunities for people to get together, ask questions. We broke out many of the elements of the regional plan and talked about them in dialogues, and invited people in. We were inclusive to a fault. ...we kept on listening and listening and then we listened again, and then the same people came back and we listened to them again.

Bill: The problem was, as I said, they did all this consultation and then went behind closed doors, made a deal, and then rushed it out.

Graeme, with NAIOP, also recognized the central dilemma faced by Metro Vancouver in this regard, commenting that:

...unless our comments are earth-shattering, nothing changes. Because you have to go back to all 21 (municipalities) and get them to sign in to any change. Like you can imagine what a nightmare that is, to get

municipalities to agree to any changes. So we knew we had very little opportunity to impact anything at this point.

And subsequently:

I mean, they didn't get everything right, but I don't know how you can. It's going to be a flawed document because there's going to be so many interest groups.

In terms of a "flawed document", other interviewees expressed the notion that the strategic elements of the RGS were compromised because of the need to achieve consensus between so many different actors. Bill noted that having regional town centres spread throughout the region is not very strategic from a growth management perspective. However, it was his perspective that multiple growth centres were required because "every municipality wanted one". Alex, from the City of Burnaby, made a similar comment, noting that: "...for me the bells were going right at the beginning because it didn't seem strategic. It was more this amalgam of what each municipality wanted to do."

From these comments, it would appear that the process to create the RGS was very much a consensual process of horizontal compromise and deliberation between the different actors involved. However, the research revealed a considerable difference between the collaboration and deliberation amongst the local authorities, referenced above, and the CSOs. For the local authorities and municipalities, almost all of the study participants did share the perspective that Metro Vancouver, as an institution, does provide for deliberation and consensual decision-making. Elaine, from the Burke Mountain Naturalists, commented that:

...the greatest value of having Metro Vancouver is the fact that it brings all these politicians together. And it kind of forces them to work together. The staff at Metro Vancouver, I think provide, have a lot of educational value...these politicians in the beginning they come with their own ideas...and over time they educate each other...the most impressive thing it does is it educates all these politicians that come in.

Mayor Corrigan very much espouses the view that Metro Vancouver, in general, supports and pursues consensual decision-making between the municipalities as equal partners:

...when we talk about regional planning we're talking about those cities coming together in areas of mutual interest. Not to be ruled by a Metro government, not to have all of their policies subsumed by a Metro government, but for them to be partners with other municipalities in a contractual agreement, on what benefits each of them.

Speaking specifically on the topic of the RGS, Mayor Corrigan further stated that his goal as regional chair was to take 24 municipalities and First Nation and "come to an agreement that would have everybody sign on in a consensual fashion, to something that would bound them to a contractual arrangement with other municipalities on the way they would behave in the future. Not an easy row to hoe." He further commented that at other levels of government, and even within organizations, similar discussions will take place behind closed doors, amongst a caucus. He compared the Metro Vancouver board to a decision-making caucus, with the significant difference that proceedings at Metro Vancouver meetings are all matters of public record.

For the RGS, it has to be remembered that there were several mechanisms for collaboration and deliberation amongst municipalities on a consistent basis throughout the period of review. The Metro Vancouver Board, the Land Use and Transportation Committee, and the Regional Planning Committee were all provided with updates and undertook discussions regarding the RGS. Chris felt generally that the institutional structure at Metro Vancouver is very valuable at the municipal level, and also mentioned sub-committees, such as the regional planning advisory committee, where planning directors got to meet once a month. She emphasized that this sort of structure does not

exist in most regions, and facilitates considerable interest in regional issues from municipal planning staff.

Further, the TAC enabled planning staff from all the municipalities to meet and discuss the plan on a regular basis. Alex (city of Burnaby) noted the challenges with the process and the number of actors involved, stating that they would bring forward concerns that were specific to Burnaby, and contribute to the discussion of overall regional issues. Also, that having their concerns addressed required real persistence. The written submission from Burnaby was one of the most extensive, and Alex and Brian (also from the city of Burnaby) noted that they brought the same concerns to the TAC meetings. They related the experience of working slowly to get agreement with the other planners on the issues they were looking to address. To have their many issues addressed required what they described as a relentless effort, first raising 39 issues, then 17 issues, then 9, and finally getting an end product that they were willing to sign. Their personal account of the process confirms Metro Vancouver's goal to have the consent of all the member municipalities over the final plan before proceeding. Alex and Brian both commented that though the process was a "real grind" in the end, to get the consensus, was a real achievement, and that there were "suggestions by everybody that shaped the product".

The notion that the process was a "real grind" raises an additional challenge in terms of creating the RGS. The time involved was extensive (2006 – 2011), and Alex and Brian noted that, to some extent, the TAC became 'watered down' as time went on, and fewer senior planning directors attended the meetings. Brian related that at times it became challenging for him to attend the meetings, and sent another planner in his stead. It is very likely that the significant time required to create, and finally ratify, the

RGS presented some challenges in terms of the collaboration and consensual decision-making that were required. This may have been a contributing factor when, in the summer of 2010, the TAC met to review the implementation and amendment policies contained in the RGS and, from the perspective of UDI, rushed to approve the plan quickly afterwards.

While the process to create the RGS did entail a great deal of collaboration, consensual, and horizontal decision-making between the member local authorities, the same does not appear to be true when it comes to CSOs. At least not to the same extent. The process to create the RGS did provide opportunities for CSOs to collaborate with one another, and with regional agencies, to some extent at the beginning of the process. Bill, of the UDI, could recall meetings that Metro Vancouver held between “themselves, local governments, translink, and stakeholders” at the beginning of the process. Bryn from Dynamic Cities also recalled “breakfasts at the Wosk centre” with a range of groups, where people got to take turns speaking at a microphone. Chris (Metro Vancouver) recalled a meeting at a library of 80 or 90 people, which consisted of presentations followed by breakout discussion groups. She noted it was very engaged group of “business associations and other groups” with a lot of “really good discussion” whereby Metro Vancouver staff did “pick up some good ideas”. However, she noted the challenge with forums such as these, relating that it is difficult to take all the feedback and incorporate it into the plan.

Further, none of the representatives from the CSOs that were interviewed could recall reviewing submissions from other CSOs. Their interactions and formal suggestions to Metro Vancouver concerning the RGS occurred as one way interactions. Chris mentioned this difficulty, relating how considerably difficult it is to actually get

people to talk to one another. She suggested this is an important measure of a good public process, and conceded that: "...you know, did the business community hear what the environmental community had to say, yeah, it wasn't done well enough."

It is also evident that the process to create the RGS did not empower CSOs with equal or "horizontal" decision-making powers together with municipalities. Given Metro Vancouver's history, established institutional structure, and the regulatory framework within which the RGS was created, this was never a likely possibility and hardly comes as a surprise. However, in the context of new regionalism, the benefit to a *governance* approach is the opportunity to include a diverse array of actors, and possibly achieve increased levels of cooperation on a regional basis. Some of the CSOs did have the opportunity to make presentations directly to the Metro Vancouver board or one or more committees. In addition, as mentioned previously, the UDI, NAIOP, and the Business Council of BC discussed the RGS together with municipalities, and even with Metro Vancouver staff. Nonetheless, it cannot be said that CSOs were provided with an opportunity to collaborate or deliberate with municipalities on an equal basis.

However, the process to review the RGS, and include CSOs in the process, did catalyze some discussion amongst CSOs within their networks. Graeme indicated that in response to the request for written submissions, the NAIOP contacted UDI, and a meeting was held to discuss each other's responses. He notes that they decided they were addressing separate issues, and so made written submissions independently of one another. The UDI did participate in a coalition between the UDI, the Business Council of BC, and the BC Chamber of Commerce. In May of 2011 the three organizations submitted a press release calling for Metro Vancouver to initiate a regional dialogue, and to include the three organizations in discussions to "...seek a resolution of

the concerns that a broad range of business organizations have raised regarding the proposed Regional Growth Strategy” (UDI, 2011). The three organizations opposed many features of the RGS, and worked together to lobby both Metro Vancouver and member municipalities to make changes concerning the amendment process and the industrial land designations. When asked about how frequently the coalition came together, Bill indicated that the three would not collaborate on a regular basis, but came together periodically when a significant regional issue was being contemplated. The last such instance he could recall was when the Community Charter was being drafted and contemplated in BC.

Bryn noted that his organization’s participation and review of the RGS did spark some degree of discussions amongst his own network of peers. In the case of Dynamic Cities and the Burke Mountain Naturalists, they were already engaged in discussions and collaboration together with colleagues and peers on regional matters. Although the RGS did not enable these CSOs to collaborate together with other groups who made submissions, or with municipalities, the process did catalyze dialogue amongst CSOs and their existing peers. Bryn notes: “...amongst that network, as soon as it came up, there was a discussion”. Elaine notes that Burke Mountain Naturalists has a network of organizations with whom they will work together and collaborate when appropriate.

The Business Council of BC related a similar story. Jock notes that they actually undertook a lot of work, going out to speak and meet with mayors, local councillors, and what he called the grassroots business voice, working with the BC Chamber of Commerce and business groups specifically in Langley, Surrey and Richmond. Jock indicated that there is not a regional entity to speak for business, and so despite BCBC’s mandate as a provincial organization, they will try and serve as a voice for regional

businesses upon request from their members when issues such as the RGS arise. Jock emphasized that the business community in the lower mainland of BC is just as fragmented as the political jurisdictions, and noted the considerable lacuna in terms of strategic, intelligent, informed dialogue on a regional basis. Bryn also mentioned the lack of a consistent forum or regional framework to deal with issues such as creeks and streams in the regional watershed. He noted that although the RGS sparked discussion amongst his peers, and he was invited to present before Metro Vancouver committees, the length of time required for the process, and the sporadic nature of the events held to discuss the RGS discouraged ongoing discussion and collaboration amongst his peers: "...as it is you have all this flurry of work, and then it goes on the shelf and everybody just forgets about it. And so if it was more living and ongoing I think it would be much more engaging."

Bryn's latter comment illustrates a key difference between Metro Vancouver as a forum for local authorities and as a forum for CSOs. Metro Vancouver's long history and established institutional structure facilitates learning and dialogue between member local authorities on a consistent basis over time. For CSOs, collaboration and deliberation on a regional scale is sporadic and/or episodic. Further, much of the collaboration occurs between pre-existing networks of peers.

Both Hugh and Chris related the notion that, in terms of the RGS, more could have been done in terms of a regional forum for the public and CSOs. Hugh related his impression that more large, regional conferences had been held in the past and during the previous round of the growth strategy. He noted the process for the RGS seemed to move away from those big conferences. Although the interviewees mentioned meetings such as those above at the beginning of the process, it appears that these were public

meetings rather than forums for CSOs. Minutes from the meetings attribute feedback and comments to individuals, rather than to groups. Further, none of the CSOs interviewed could recall any of the meetings with clarity, and had difficulty trying to recall whether meetings they attended were held for the RGS or as part of Metro Vancouver's broader Sustainable Region Initiative, which included sustainability breakfasts. The sustainable region initiative is intended to generate public discourse about regional issues, rather than inform or influence policy-making at Metro Vancouver.

The significant time required to create the RGS was also a barrier to ongoing collaboration amongst CSOs. As Bill from UDI notes "they did all this consultation, then they went behind closed doors". Bryn (Dynamic Cities) noted that, with the considerable time entailed, "...the relationships that you build get lost in that period of time". Hugh indicated his biggest issue with the whole process was the length of time it required, that some of the momentum was lost along the way. However, he emphasized the challenge with a plan of this scope, stating that: "There's a strong negotiated element to all of this, there's a lot of grey areas. So it is time consuming and messy. And that's its downside." Ever since the plan has been approved, Bill suggested one of the ongoing challenges with the implementation of the strategy regards the consistency amongst Metro Vancouver staff, noting that the planning staff who were instrumental in crafting the plan left just before the plan was adopted or shortly thereafter. Bryn related the same sentiment, noting that: "I don't even know anybody at Metro anymore. You know, so that network is lost when it's done that sporadically".

The involvement of CSOs in the process to create the RGS did not facilitate collaboration or deliberation to the same extent that it did amongst municipalities. Their involvement was not structured in a way to do so, (ie, one way communications between

CSOs and Metro Vancouver, versus forums with one another) and was not sufficiently consistent to enable the consensus building or deliberation that the City of Burnaby experienced during the period of review. Nonetheless, collaboration between municipalities such as Burnaby did take place to a significant extent, and in fact, it appears that some degree of learning took place between local authorities through the Metro Vancouver institution for the review of the RGS.

5.2.1. *Learning and Awareness*

Chris raised the notion of judgement in her interview, which she described as a process whereby participants move from their preconceived opinions to a new judgement, based on discussion and consideration of trade-offs and the opinions of others. She conceded that the process to create the RGS may not have enabled this between CSOs. However, the learning that Chris is referring to, whereby opinions change through deliberation, is a prospective indicator of collaboration. There was evidence of this in the discussions and consultations between local authorities in the case of the RGS, and amongst members of the Metro Vancouver board more generally. Speaking of the RGS generally, Mayor Corrigan noted that the plan was meant to

support the autonomy of the municipalities who tended to learn from each other the best practices in which they could accommodate things. ...frequent transit networks for instance came out of this, in which it was recognized that you can't all get skytrain or light rail or any kind of those fixed rail options. How do we find ways to provide the service to the municipalities that will give them the equivalent level of service?

He commented further that:

getting the mayors together - they're not talking about whether or not there's a road in their community, they're talking about how does my community fit with the other communities.

Speaking more specifically about the RGS, Chris noted that the best example of learning took place discussing the question around preserving industrial land. She noted there were a lot of people, both municipalities and groups, who didn't understand why there was a regional interest in preserving industrial land. She suggested that "...a lot of learning went on during the process of why it's important to protect at the regional scale." As evidence, she cited the fact that the protection of industrial land was not a feature of the LRSP, and was a new feature to the RGS, thereby necessitating some learning for those involved. Alex and Brian (city of Burnaby) noted that there was a time when municipal planners did not take into account the role their localities were to play in the broader regional context. They recalled approaching Metro Vancouver to discuss specifics in this regard, and that their approach was unconventional at the time. The RGS process did require, formally, all municipalities to consider and address their 'fit' in terms of the Metro Vancouver region, both through the TAC process and the requirement for RCS's after the adoption of the RGS.

Hugh, a former senior planner with Metro Vancouver, also mentioned very specific issues of clarification raised by municipalities as part of the process, questioning things like population projections and how to control the development of urban housing in agricultural zones. Elaine also feels that the process enables learning amongst municipalities, though she attributed this to the Metro Vancouver institution more generally, rather than the RGS process specifically stating that: "...it's whatever committee they're dealing with. Whether it's waste management, or you know regional parks, they all come in and learn as they go." In addition, Alex and Brian, of Burnaby, both had some awareness of issues raised by other municipalities – a strong indicator that participants in the process did in fact learn and deliberate with one another. Alex

noted that the submission and agenda raised by the City of Richmond, for instance, was “quite thoughtful...in my opinion a lot more densification generally than what I thought the regional plan would have allowed.” Also, that he felt Vancouver was very thoughtful in their submissions. These comments indicate that representatives from the City of Burnaby did discuss and consider issues brought up by other municipalities.

When CSOs were questioned about the degree to which the process generated learning amongst their peers, or increased awareness of regional issues, responses were mixed. The UDI reinforced Chris’s suggestion that the importance of addressing the shortage of industrial land was raised through the process. Although they disagree with the way in which industrial land is addressed in the RGS, Bill did feel that the process raised awareness of the problem generally. Jock, from the BCBC, noted that there is very little discussion or consideration for regional issues in news coverage or local politics, that the coverage is all municipal, and the only time regional issues are considered is when large capital projects are being proposed. He viewed the process as completely ineffectual in providing learning between CSOs or raising awareness of regional issues more generally.

Hugh believes that there was an increase in awareness for “sustainability in general and parts of the RGS”, though he noted that this may have been attributable to the many workshops, the sustainability breakfast dialogues, and luncheons that were being held at the same time. For Jock, his concern with the RGS as a mechanism to raise awareness or provoke learning centred on the lack of what he perceived to be consistent, persistent, strategic and intellectual discourse on the regional scale, stating that:

...this is a region that is fundamentally intellectually impoverished in the discourse around our regional structure...we may be a global city region, I think we are, but absolutely there's no evidence that that mindset exists, either in the business community or at the political level, or amongst any community groups. Because fragmentation has fostered myopia and parochialism, in my view.

Jock did concede that there was some awareness surrounding the RGS during the period of review, but emphasized that it was not at a level that resulted in intellectual or strategic discourse pertaining to the region as a whole. He felt this way both in terms of the municipalities involved, and the CSOs. Graeme mentioned the significant challenge in this regard, asking "how do you get that provincial, overarching "this is the best thing to do for the region". It's difficult to come up with that. It's the best we have, it really is the best we have." In terms of strategic learning or discussion of regional issues, Alex felt that the previous regional plan (LRSP) was more strategic, in pursuing compact growth in certain areas, whereas the RGS became "...watered down to get consensus" by the time it was complete.

This dimension to the RGS, as a limited framework with which to consider broad regional issues, relates again to the regulatory framework within which the plan was contemplated, and Metro Vancouver's institutional framework and history focused on sustainability. Graeme, of the NAOIP, mentioned the huge disconnect between the RGS, Translink and transit planning. The RGS outlines sustainable transportation choices as a goal, and although Translink was involved in the process to create the RGS, there is no mechanism to plan transportation infrastructure in a way that reflects the RGS. Hugh mentioned transportation as an issue that was raised in the process, noting groups that were concerned with the controversy around the Port Mann bridge expansion, Highway 1 expansion, and the changes to the governance structure at Translink. However, Metro Vancouver, and the RGS, have no mandate or capacity to take on or address these

issues in a meaningful way. Mayor Corrigan mentioned the change to the governance structure at Translink that impeded the types of discussions they were able to have at Metro Vancouver, noting that a key element to cooperation between the municipalities at the outset was based on the notion that transportation benefits would follow good regional planning. However, with the change to Translink's governance structure in 2006, "...we lost in essence the key to making it successful, and so continuing on with our approach without that element was extremely difficult".

Bill also brought up the lack of involvement of the province in the process, noting that if issues such as industrial land and the transportation of goods through the region were going to be addressed in the RGS, the province should have played a more significant role. It is possible that the contested history of regional planning and transportation planning described in Chapter 4 is an ongoing challenge, and inhibited the involvement of the province in the RGS. Further, Metro Vancouver's history as a utility and service-providing institutional structure did not require the province to be involved in a significant way. Bill commented that although some "junior staffers" may have attended some of the meetings, the province was largely hands off, and as a result have no commitment to the final plan. Further, a range of issues could not be discussed in any kind of substantive way as part of the process, for the simple reason that the province, a major decision-maker regarding infrastructure spending in the region, was not involved.²⁷

²⁷ Bill's comments are reinforced by major transportation infrastructure spending decisions in the region. The decision to build the Canada RAV-line was decided and funded by the Province and Federal Government (Smith, 2006), and in 2012 the Ministry of Transportation announced a consultation process to replace the Massey Tunnel (Province of BC, 2012). Neither project was identified as a priority in any regional plan.

The process to create the RGS was presented with a significant challenge in terms of the scope of issues raised during the process and the number of agencies, CSOs, and local authorities involved. The process facilitated some significant learning and a considerable degree of collaboration and deliberation between the municipalities that were involved. However, Metro Vancouver's institutional structure and the history of regional planning appear to have constrained the extent to which CSOs were empowered to deliberate and collaborate with one another. The consistent learning provided by the Metro Vancouver institution for municipalities does not appear to extend to CSOs in the region, and the fragmented or non-existent regional discourse described by Jock of the BCBC further compounds this issue. This may limit the extent to which the plan can serve as a strategic policy-making document to influence broad regional outcomes, as the court case between Metro Vancouver and the Township of Langley would seem to imply. Specifically, the ability of Metro Vancouver to serve as a regional forum, and enable collaboration and deliberation in the process to create the RGS was constrained in the following ways:

1. Metro Vancouver's institutional structure as a service provider for local authorities restricted the participation of CSOs, other levels of government, and agencies as collaborative partners in the process to create the RGS.
2. The regulatory approach and framework, and the focus on sustainability within which the RGS was created, limited the scope of issues that could be meaningfully discussed or addressed during the process.

The regulatory approach of the RGS was particularly problematic from the standpoint of regional governance, and the type of forum envisioned in new regionalism. In his comments, Mayor Corrigan highlighted the importance of driving consensus and avoiding a situation where municipalities felt "ruled" by Metro Vancouver (above, p. 89). However, in one of their written submissions, the City of Burnaby makes a direct request

to Metro Vancouver to pursue a '*mutually agreeable approach*' or to achieve a '*general municipal consensus*' on the appropriate regulatory framework (above, p. 64). It is not clear at all that the final version of the RGS ever met these expectations. Thus, the "bounds of consensus" (Savitch and Vogel, 1996, p. 298) may have been exceeded to the detriment of Metro Vancouver's already limited political legitimacy in the case of the RGS.

Nonetheless, the RGS did provide member municipalities and local authorities such as Burnaby the opportunity to collaborate with one another and shape a regional land-use plan. The process, and the Metro Vancouver institution generally, achieved some degree of learning and shared understanding amongst municipalities. Further, there is evidence that CSOs engaged in discussions pertaining to regional issues amongst their existing networks and peers, were able to raise the profile of some regional issues, and were afforded the opportunity to influence the final version of the RGS.

Chapter 6. Conclusion

...governance through partnership and collaboration is widely seen as crucial in bolstering a city's strategic capacity for economic and social development. (Bradford and Bramwell, 2014, p. 14)

It is helpful to refer back to the scale from Table 3.1, provided again below.

Not Informed	→	Informed	→	Consulted	→	Empowered to deliberate and collaborate
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In the case of the RGS, a great deal of time and effort was expended to include municipalities, multiple levels of government, agencies, and CSOs in consultation to create the final version of the plan. In reference to the scale above, the City of Burnaby, and Metro Vancouver member local authorities, were empowered to deliberate and collaborate with one another, and with Metro Vancouver staff, to shape and create the RGS. To be clear, not all issues raised by municipalities were included in the final version. However, the multiple versions of the RGS did exhibit changes that aligned with recommendations from municipalities - as an example the land use designation "mixed employment" arose directly as part of the deliberative process at the level of the TAC. Further, the final written submission from the City of Burnaby, and comments from two former planning directors, indicate their perception that many of the city's requests were accommodated.

CSOs were definitely consulted (toward the higher end of the democratic engagement scale) as part of the process, demonstrated by the written submissions and

interview participants who relayed the perception that some of their requests had been addressed in later versions of the plan – a more limited result in terms of impact. However, it is not clear at all that CSOs were empowered to deliberate and collaborate in the creation of the RGS. Although the research indicated some degree of collaboration between CSOs and their peers, comments from Bryn, Jock, Elaine and Bill confirm that this collaboration was largely across existing networks and was “episodic” in nature. The more consistent learning and collaboration between municipalities that is provided via Metro Vancouver did not carry over to CSOs. In addition, although municipalities did hear from CSOs to some extent throughout the process, CSOs were not empowered to collaborate together with municipalities with them or with Metro Vancouver staff in shaping the final document and outcomes.

The process to create the RGS did exhibit some considerable constraints from the standpoint of a regional forum, and new regionalism. Although the City of Burnaby and CSOs both influenced the final version of the plan, their influence was limited to the specific strategies in the plan, and they were not enabled to raise or address more normative goals or objectives in a meaningful way. For example, the City of Burnaby raised the desire to return to the voluntary consensual approach of previous plans, as well as to explore additional concerns such as social issues and peak oil. CSOs raised issues such as more substantive economic development policies and the possibility that the RGS should occupy a more prominent position in Metro Vancouver’s hierarchy of plans; all requests that were not explored. Although some CSOs were content to raise the profile of broader regional issues in a general sense, groups such as the Urban Development Institute and the Business Council of BC desired more meaningful, consistent, and effective discussion surrounding many of the issues raised in the RGS.

Though these groups recognized the limited mandate and scope of Metro Vancouver and the RGS in this regard, they were both nonetheless frustrated that the broad, sweeping goals of the RGS could not take into account more holistic economic development or transportation concerns.

The perception of the RGS as a “passive” plan focused on restrictions, without any mandate or capacity to take on more deliberate policies, was a considerable frustration for some of the CSOs and planning staff from the City of Burnaby. In addition, the considerable time required to create the RGS may have diminished the extent to which the process enabled collaboration amongst both municipalities and CSOs. However, it is difficult to conceive how the extensive consultation required for the RGS could have been shortened, due to the sheer scope of issues under discussion and the number of agents involved.

Nonetheless, from the standpoint of new regionalism, the following elements enabled Metro Vancouver to “Act as a Regional Forum” in the case of the RGS:

1. The long history, credibility and consistency of Metro Vancouver as an institution and forum amongst local authorities.
2. The wide range of mechanisms available to both municipalities and CSOs to influence and discuss the RGS together with Metro Vancouver staff, board, their peers and local regional networks.

Comments from Elaine, of the Burke Mountain Naturalists, Mayor Corrigan, Chris, and Hugh (both formerly of Metro Vancouver) that Metro Vancouver as an institution facilitates a high degree of learning for and amongst municipal politicians reinforces the value of the first element above. In terms of the second element above, both CSOs and Mayor Corrigan expressed the notion that the process for the RGS, and the Metro

Vancouver institution, provides an opportunity for CSOs to “layer their approach” and raise issues of concern via multiple avenues (eg., locally and at the regional level).

Unfortunately, the process did not provide for “horizontal decision-making” or something approaching full deliberation between all the actors involved in the process. Despite exerting some influence over the strategies and tactics in the end product, CSOs did not learn or interact with one another to a significant degree, and did not learn or interact with municipalities in a way that shaped the normative goals of the RGS. Two primary factors that restricted the plan in this regard were: 1) Metro Vancouver’s institutional framework, and 2) the historical focus on sustainability and the more regulatory approach of the RGS.

1. Metro Vancouver’s institutional framework

New regionalism envisions a range of actors including private, public and governments collaborating together in equal partnership to pursue and explore solutions to regional problems. Although the process to create the RGS included a whole range of actors, final decision-making authority rested with the municipalities that make up the organization’s constituency. This was made clear in the summer of 2010 when the TAC went behind closed doors to complete the plan, and came up with a final version that CSOs and other agencies and partners were no longer in a position to influence in a collaborative manner. Previous versions of the RGS may have achieved a more collaborative approach, as earlier regional plans were more aspirational and voluntary in nature. With these versions, there was far less at stake for the constituent municipalities. Comments from Hugh (Metro Vancouver), Alex, and Brian (city of Burnaby), and the lengthy and detailed written submissions from the City of Burnaby, illustrate the concern from municipalities that the RGS would be restricting and directing municipal land use

decision-making. Mayor Corrigan, who served as Chair of the Land Use and Transportation Committee, also reinforced this point emphasizing that his role was to come to a contractual agreement that everyone would sign onto. Further, that Metro Vancouver's role was to bring municipalities together in partnership in a contractual agreement. Pursuing an agreement with the municipalities, combined with the more regulatory approach described below, limited the degree to which other parties could participate in the process in the manner envisioned under new regionalism.

2. The historical focus on sustainability and the more regulatory approach of the RGS.

The historical focus on sustainability in regional planning shaped the normative goals of the RGS from the outset. The RGS of 2011 emerged as one plan amongst a whole suite of plans focused on sustainability, and it is evident from the review of written submissions and interviews that it was not possible to explore different, alternative goals in a meaningful way. In addition, the more regulatory approach of the RGS emerged in part as an effort to pursue sustainability goals in a more effective way and to restrict the degree to which municipalities could deviate from the plan. Unfortunately, the contested history of land use planning in the region provides an unclear and weak political base or institutional framework with which to undertake a more regulatory approach. This further compounded the first element above, resulting in a need to drive consensus amongst the municipalities at all costs at the exclusion of some of the suggestions and feedback from CSOs.

The two elements above restricted the degree to which horizontal cooperation could be achieved across a variety of actors in the case of the RGS. In addition, vertical cooperation (the inclusion or cooperation between senior levels of government) appears

to also have been restricted. The involvement of other levels of government was not a focus of this study, but the findings confirm that this may be a critical dimension to deal effectively with regional issues, especially political issues such as land use planning. A study by Weir, Rongerude, and Ansell entitled "Collaboration is Not Enough" (2007) makes this point, and a review of the effectiveness of the RGS since it was ratified in 2011 would provide an excellent case study to explore the importance of this dimension to regional problem-solving.

Nonetheless, Metro Vancouver's long history and culture of taking on holistic, broad, and progressive regional challenges provides a strong foundation to address an array of challenges that are most pronounced at the metropolitan scale. Metro Vancouver is unique as an approach to metropolitan governance in North America, and has enjoyed considerable success balancing the desire of local authorities for autonomy together with the need to cooperate with one another. Mayor Corrigan related the incremental changes to Metro Vancouver that have occurred over time, as municipalities identified areas where cooperation would facilitate greater success; first water management, then sewerage, then regional parks, then housing and now regional planning. However, in taking on more complex challenges like transit and regional planning tensions have arisen. Derek noted how:

We were given regional planning and then had it taken away...but gradually the municipalities have pushed back, to try to assert themselves into a role that gave them greater control of issues that are important to all of the cities. And one of the things that came out of that was regional planning.

Unfortunately, it is possible that the more regulatory approach of the RGS may have "pushed back" too much. In 1996 Savitch and Vogel noted that "...regional cooperation has been set back when it directly confronts cutting issues" (p. 293). These

two authors note that collaborative efforts at the regional scale typically avoid “thorny issues” for the main reason that although “Regions may be managerially competent...they are politically weak, and this makes all the difference when it comes to taking on bold policies.” (Savitch and Vogel, 1996, p. 295). The RGS may have endeavoured to take on the “thorny issue” of regional planning in a more concerted way with a more regulatory approach, but doing so limited the incremental improvement in regional cooperation that has been observed in past decades. It is evident that the more regulatory approach of the RGS extended beyond the “bounds of consensus” highlighted by Savitch and Vogel, and doing so compromised the degree to which a forum of the type envisioned under new regionalism was realized.

In their edited volume titled *Governing Urban Economies*, Bradford and Bramwell (2014) note that the practice of governance includes the extent to which collective purposes can be realized through concerted mobilization of resources from public, private and community sectors (p. 14). Joe Berridge (2012) notes that in today’s economy, cities should focus on *convening* as opposed to regulating, leveraging their resources to promote and stimulate connections. Although the ultimate effectiveness of the RGS is beyond the scope of this study, the degree of collaboration that took place in the creation of the plan is likely to influence the extent to which public, private and community interests work towards the goals of the RGS.

Further research could be done to ascertain whether the involvement of individual *citizens* or *residents* by CSOs, municipalities or other regional agencies occurred in the case of the RGS, and whether broad public awareness and support is instrumental to the pursuit of the plan’s goals. If Metro Vancouver had the authority or mandate to directly address the many issues raised in the RGS, it could be argued that it

would not be necessary to ensure collaboration or deliberation amongst the many actors mentioned by Bradford and Bramwell. However, when it comes to regional planning, Metro Vancouver has historically relied on a *governance* approach under the new regionalist model to achieve collective action and decision-making on a metropolitan scale. This model necessitates collaboration and deliberation between governments and nongovernmental associations and organizations, in addition to multiple levels of government. Without clear jurisdictional authority, Metro Vancouver is dependent on these dimensions for the successful pursuit of regional goals. The court case between Metro Vancouver and the Township of Langley reinforces this point.

Both the successes and the challenges outlined above highlight the importance of collaborative forums from the standpoint of democratic governance at the metropolitan scale. Dlabac's (2013) notion that metropolitan governance entails some kind of capacity for collective action clarifies that democracy can be conceived as a theory of action, as opposed to resistance. By prescribing normative goals from the outset, and adopting a prescriptive policy stance, Metro Vancouver garnered resistance. However, by providing a consistent forum in the form of the TAC, a permanent forum for municipal representatives at the board level, and an iterative review process concerning the tactics outlined in the RGS, the region exhibited some degree of collective action. Kubler and Heinelt (2002) consider that a reasonable degree of problem-solving can occur through "soft" forms of cooperation, in which coordination is achieved through negotiation and power-sharing. Metro Vancouver must be cautious in adopting a prescriptive bureaucratic approach to regional issues, and ensure the organization's gains in political legitimacy as a regional forum are not compromised in the pursuit of "hard" policy mandates.

Kubler and Heinelt (2002) identify that most of the work in the area of new metropolitan governance has “privileged the question of efficiency and effectiveness” (p. 11). The pursuit of regional problem-solving, coordinated action, or, in the case of the RGS, sustainability, cannot exclude the democratic dimension to decision-making. Moving forward, assuming no structural changes at Metro Vancouver or regional government in British Columbia, future efforts at regional land use planning should strive as high as possible on the spectrum of collaboration above between the vested interests and actors. Metro Vancouver’s third role is to “Act as a Regional Forum”. Further, in 2014, Metro Vancouver further elaborated on this role as follows:

What we do: Serve as the main political forum for discussion of significant community issues at the regional levels.²⁸

While the organization clearly provides a forum for learning and cooperation between municipalities on a consistent basis, this same forum should be extended to regional CSOs for more democratic articulation of regional goals and effective pursuit of regional solutions. Furthermore, the legislation governing regional land use planning is intended for regional districts to explore “social, economic and environmental objectives in relation to the regional district”, population and growth projections, and targets for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions (Local Government Act, Section 850). These issues are far beyond the capacity of any level of government or set of actors, further reinforcing the need for cooperation and collaboration.

²⁸ Metro Vancouver, About us, Web (accessed February 2014): <http://www.metrovancouver.org/about/Pages/default.aspx>

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Appendix A. Civic Associations involved in the RGS²⁹

2007	Feb 2009	Nov 2009	2010
Metro Vancouver Agricultural Awareness Committee	Agricultural Land Commission	Agricultural Land Commission	Agricultural Land Commission
Business Council of BC	Business Council of BC	Business Council of BC	BC Agricultural Council
BC Landscaping and Nursery Association	BC Agricultural Council	BC Hydro	BC Assessment Authority
Immigration Watch Canada (IWC)	BC Hydro	Burke Mountain Naturalists	Ladner Reach Properties
Madison Pacific Properties	BC Non-Profit Housing Association	National Association of Industrial and Office Properties (NAIOP)	National Association of Industrial and Office Properties (NAIOP)
Metro Vancouver Planning Coalition	Beedie Group	Environment Canada	Fraser Health Authority
National Association of Industrial and Office Properties (NAIOP)	Bentall LP	Fraser Health - Chief Medical Health Officer	The Gateway Council
Public Works and Government Services of Canada	David Suzuki Foundation	Fraser Health Municipal Government Advisory Council	Integrated Land Management Bureau
Remax Ridge Meadows Realty	Dunbar Residents Association	Garden City Lands Coalition Society	Neighborhoods for a Sustainable Vancouver
Smart Growth BC	Dynamic Cities Projects	Great Northern Way Campus	PCI Development Corporation
Transform Canada	Environment Canada	Integrated Land Management Bureau	Port of Metro Vancouver
Vancouver Food Policy Council	Fraser Health Authority	International Centre for Sustainable Cities	Terasen Gas

²⁹ Metro Vancouver. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://www.metrovancouver.org/planning/development/strategy/Pages/RGSResources.aspx>

2007	Feb 2009	Nov 2009	2010
Vancouver Fraser Port Authority	Fraser Health Municipal Government Advisory Council	Islands Trust	Translink
Urban Development Institute	Fraser Valley Regional District	Neighborhoods for a Sustainable Vancouver	Vancouver Airport Authority
	Greater Vancouver Gateway Council	PCI Development Corporation	Vancouver Coastal Health
	Greater Vancouver Homebuilders Association	Port of Metro Vancouver	Ministry of Agriculture and Lands
	Livable Region Coalition	Public Works and Government Services Canada	Ministry of Environment
	Lower Mainland Network for affordable housing	Katzie First Nation	Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport
	Neighborhoods for a Sustainable Vancouver	Translink	Ministry of Community, Sport and Cultural Development
	PCI Development Corporation	Urban Development Institute	Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General
	Port of Metro Vancouver	Maple Ridge Agricultural Advisory Committee	Musqueam Indian Band
	Public Works and Government Services Canada	Vancouver Coastal Health Authority	University Neighbourhood Association
	Squamish-Lillooet Regional District	Ministry of Advanced Educational Labour Market Development	UBC
	Translink	Ministry of Agriculture and Lands	Vancouver Area Cycling Coalition
	Urban Development Institute (2008 and 2009)	Ministry of Energy Mines and Petroleum Resources	Vancouver Economic Development Commission

2007	Feb 2009	Nov 2009	2010
	Vancouver Airport Authority	Ministry of Environment	UBC Alma Mater Society
	Vancouver Coastal Health Authority	Ministry of Healthy Living and Sport	
	Ministry of Agriculture and Lands	Ministry of Housing and Social Development	
	Ministry of Environment	Ministry of Small Business, Technology and Economic Development	
		MK Delta Land Group	
		Oakdale Heritage Society	
		Pitt Polder Preservation Society	
		Silver Valley Neighbourhood Association	
		Surrey Board of Trade	
		Synapse Strategies	
		Terasen Gas	
		The Vancouver Board of Trade	
		Transport Canada	
		UBC Feb and March	
		Vancouver Area Cycling Coalition	
		West Coast Environmental Law	

2007	Feb 2009	Nov 2009	2010
		Western Transportation Advisory Council	
		Westwood Plateau Community Association	

Appendix B. Overview of Meeting Minutes re: RGS³⁰

Overview of Board and Committee Meeting Minutes pertaining to the Regional Growth Strategy between 2006-2010		
2006	June 2006: RGS discussed, but no presentation	Land Use and Transportation Committee
2007	Feb 2007: RGS discussed, but no presentation. April 2007: RGS discussed, but no presentation. June and July 2007: discussed, but no presentation. September 2007: discussion regarding commencement of public consultations. Oct. 2007 - discussion on amendment process. November - public consultations discussed, as well as report from Chris DeMarco	Land Use and Transportation Committee
2008	Feb 8, 2008: RGS discussed, incl. report from Demarco and the desire to move forward with draft. Concern that there was no overall goal for the RGS. 2 compilations of feedback provided to the board. Feb 26, 2008 - Special Meeting just to discuss the RGS. March 2008 - delegation from <u>SmartGrowth BC</u> came to express support for RGS. Specific recommendations as well. Considerable discussion on RGS, and ongoing discussion about amendment process. April 2008 (2 meetings)- preliminary concepts report presented. Discussion of changing one of the goals occurred at this meeting. May - discussion regarding TAC, and a workshop date was set. June 2008 - presentation from TAC chair on their findings and recommendations, and much discussion. September 2008: The Committee was informed about the changes made in response to feedback received on the draft Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) from the Land Use and Transportation Committee at its June meeting in the following areas: Green Zone mapping, industrial lands protection and mapping, urban centres designation, naming of frequent transit development corridors, affordable housing targets, and the implementation process. Climate change and peak oil were added as a new strategy under goal 4. A new draft will be reviewed by the Technical Advisory Committee at its September meeting and forwarded to the Land Use and Transportation Committee in October. October 2008 - RGS mentioned on agenda, <i>but no minutes available online.</i>	Land Use and Transportation Committee

³⁰ Metro Vancouver. (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://www.metrovancouver.org/planning/development/strategy/Pages/RGSResources.aspx>

<p>2009 - RGS reviewed by Regional Planning Committee</p>	<p>Feb 2009 - Regional Planning Committee discussed - next steps for the draft version considered. March 2009 - public consultation discussed. May 2009 - ALC delegation in attendance to discuss. Municipal feedback was also received, and there was discussion about municipal concerns that their feedback was not included in draft, and of the impact of the strategy on municipal autonomy. June 2009 - delegation from lower mainland network for affordable housing. No specific requests, but overall concerns raised. June 2009 - discussed by GVRD board. Update report on consultation process. Requested staff to make a new draft based on feedback. July 2009 - delegation from Dynamic Cities regarding peak oil, some specific recommendations. Further submissions were also presented as part of several reports. September 2009 - <i>No minutes available online</i>. Agenda proposes the creation of an intergovernmental advisory committee to manage the RGS. Nov 2009 - Draft was presented to Board, and some discussion on next steps in consultation.</p>	<p>Regional Planning Committee and the GVRD Board</p>
<p>2010</p>	<p>April 2010 - Discussed, but no delegation. July 2010 - Presentation from the chair of the TAC. Sept 2010 - Considerable discussion about ratification process. Sept 2010 - also discussed at length by GVRD board, with specific recommendations and changes. Oct 2010 - Some discussion, but no delegation. Oct 2010 - GVRD discussion regarding public hearing. Nov 2010 - GVRD discussion, but no delegation. Nov 2010 - delegation from UBC Alma Mater Society. Specific comments about RGS strategy relating to transit.</p>	<p>Regional Planning Committee and the GVRD Board</p>
<p>Nov-Dec 2010</p>	<p>Five Public Hearings were held. No minutes available, but there are several written submissions. Hearings were held by appointed members of the GVRD board.</p>	<p>GVRD Board</p>

Appendix C. Interviews – Guiding Questions

1. How did you, or your organization, first hear about the proposed new Regional Growth Strategy?
2. How many times did you participate in meetings to discuss or consider the Regional Growth Strategy?
3. Were you distributed material to review in advance of the meeting(s)? Did you have sufficient time to review and fully understand the material?
4. Did you ever propose changes, additions, or amendments to the draft Regional Growth Strategy?
5. Were proposed changes or additions brought up by you, or others, incorporated into the strategy for subsequent review at a later meeting?
6. To your knowledge, were proposed changes, additions, or suggestions incorporated in the final version of the Regional Growth Strategy?
7. Were you invited to discuss and comment on all aspects of the plan? Did you feel you had sufficient time to discuss and consider a range of options with the other participants/members of the committee?
8. Did you review submissions, comments or feedback from others relating to the plan?
9. Were you ever able to negotiate specific amendments or changes to the plan? Were you able to discuss changes with others at length?,
10. Do you feel you were able to contribute to any of the final decisions regarding the Strategy or any of the proposed changes?
11. Is there anything else you would like to tell me?

Appendix D. Overview of Consultation Process for the Regional Growth Strategy

November 2007 Report: Choosing Our Future

(from report to the Land Use and Transportation Committee – Dated Feb 8, 2008)

- Made available in print and on the internet, 4000 copies distributed
- 16 Public Meetings were held, total attendance approx. 700. Format was presentation followed by a small group discussion and then a question and answer period.
- Questionnaires were distributed at the public meetings and also available on the internet. Questionnaire had open-ended questions. Also asked respondents to choose the desirable implementation action along a spectrum ranging from broad goals to regional regulation for each strategy.
- Noted that generally respondents preferred alternative c) in the spectrum of alternatives – the one associated with more regulation. Noted that it was not necessarily clear that regional regulation was *the* solution, but that the current system of planning was not adequate.
- Presentations to councils were given to 14 municipalities upon request. Municipalities could provide preliminary written comments at this stage or wait until the Draft Strategy stage.
- On November 16, 2007 the Regional Growth Strategies Roundtable was attended by municipal planning directors and engineers, Translink staff, Ministry of Transportation and Community Services staff, development industry representatives, as well as environmental, social and other community interest groups.
- Government organizations, First Nations, business and community groups received a letter informing them of the preliminary consultation process and were invited to request a presentation.
- The Metro Vancouver website provided copies of the guide, the questionnaire, and background information. The public was invited to provide written submissions and participate in a web discussion.

February 2009 Draft Regional Growth Strategy (Report to Regional Planning Committee July 10, 2009)

- 20 public meetings were organized; eight were held for sub-regions, three for individual municipalities upon request, four regional forums, three breakfast meetings and two focus groups
- The evening meetings consisted of a 10 minute video presentation, presentations on the draft Strategy's content, facilitated group discussion on each theme, electronic voting on the level of agreement with the proposals, and a presentation and discussion on governance options followed by electronic voting
- For the regional forums, four panelists were invited to provide five minute presentations, followed by dialogue.
- Breakfast meetings were the same as for the evening meetings, with the exception that the small group discussions were replaced by a question and

answer session. Feedback forms were provided for these sessions, and electronic voting was done for the governance questions.

- Focus groups were constituted so as to try and mitigate the self-selection issue with the evening meetings. The same format was used as the evening meetings.
- Members of the public could view all meeting information online, and submit feedback online.
- All municipalities were invited to make written comments on the draft version. Metro Vancouver staff also attended several municipal council meetings to provide presentations, answer questions, and receive comments.
- The draft version was forwarded to “affected local governments” for their review and feedback.
- First Nations were also invited to participate according to the “three-step process”.
- The draft was forwarded to “regionally-based groups, organizations and agencies”

November 2009 Draft Regional Growth Strategy (from Report to the Regional Planning Committee Meeting on September 3, 2010)

- Public meetings were held in 10 municipalities, consisting of a powerpoint presentation, a brief question and answer session, and a group discussion component organized around three themes. A sustainability breakfast meeting was also held in downtown Vancouver.
- On December 16, 2009 Metro Vancouver held a workshop for local government staff, provincial government ministry and agency staff, and representatives of business, community and non-profit groups. Workshop was to update attendees on the outcomes from previous consultations, and to allow attendees to express their initial comments on the draft.
- On December 16, 2009 an Intergovernmental Advisory Committee meeting was held to discuss if there were specific items to be addressed in the next draft.
- Metro Vancouver met with five municipalities, and attended a meeting of the Translink Board, the Fraser Valley Regional District Board and the Squamish Lillooet Regional District Board.
- Metro Vancouver presented to a number of groups in the region, such as the Urban Development Institute, the Real Estate Institute of BC, the National Association of Industrial and Office Properties, and the Surrey Board of Trade.
- A webinar was held on January 27, 2010. Consisted of a brief presentation followed by a question and answer session.
- The website was continually updated and provided opportunities for online comment, including an online feedback form and an ‘ask a question’ feature.
- A draft copy was sent to First Nations asking them if they had any comments. Metro Vancouver met with two First Nations.

Final Draft – Regional Growth Strategy (Report on the Public Hearing to the GVRD Board, January 14, 2011)

- A public hearing was held over several sessions, where 33 people spoke, and thirty six written submissions were received.

- The main themes from the Public Hearing were summarized into a report entitled 'Proposed Amendments to the Regional Growth Strategy and Next Steps in the Ratification Process'. Based on these, specific amendments to the RGS were proposed.