

**Programming A Regional Growth Strategy: An Evaluative Case
Study of the Regional District of Nanaimo Experience**

By

**Sean Christopher Edwin Roy
B.A. Geography
University of Victoria**

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Sean Christopher Edwin Roy

**A Thesis/Practicum submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of The University
of Manitoba in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree
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Master of City Planning**

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ABSTRACT

Programming A Regional Growth Strategy: An Evaluative Case Study of the Regional District of Nanaimo Experience

By Sean Christopher Edwin Roy B.A

The study is an attempt to understand the broad scope of sustainable development and its relationship with growth management, in the context of British Columbia's regional growth strategies legislation. This legislation has significantly promoted long-term planning for sustainable development in BC regions. The vision used is a distillation of existing sustainable development and growth management theories, strategies, principles and guidelines, with a focus on rural region planning. This practicum is an evaluation which attempts to sort out the nature of the growth management/sustainable development relationship to explore the ways in which they are potentially contradictory, competing, or complementary, and to assess how the relationship can be best handled when programming a regional growth strategy initiative as authorized under the growth strategy legislation.

Existing knowledge on this topic is generally limited to separate professions and there has been little co-ordination between the two themes. The relationship between growth management and sustainable development has not been sufficiently explored in a rural regional context. The study aims to grasp how local governments in a regional relationship can better steer long-term planning efforts towards sustainable development. One of the major goals of this study is exploring how growth management and sustainable development may be reconciled in practice. A second major goal includes drafting a set of objectives that would further advance long-term planning for explicitly sustainable development in the Regional District of Nanaimo. A third major goal is to suggest a modified growth strategy programming option for growth strategising that may be used in rural regional districts in British Columbia.

This practicum focuses on an evaluation of the Regional District of Nanaimo's programming experience of their Growth Management Plan to determine if it has advanced long-term planning for sustainable development in that region. The Regional District of Nanaimo's Growth Management Plan is also evaluated on the basis of whether the growth management program can be usefully adapted and transferred to fit a rural non-metropolitan context in British Columbia, with particular reference to the Regional District of East Kootenay context. The Regional Growth Strategy precedents in the Thompson-Nicola and Central Okanagan regions are examined to identify the differentiation between growth strategising practices in BC. This analysis has informed a programming option for growth strategising in the Regional District of East Kootenay. This programming option is supported by candidate policy that works toward a regional growth strategy that operates under a sustainable development framework.

DEDICATION

To my fiancée D'Arcy, Mom, Dad, Deanna, and Trevor
for their ongoing support, compassion, and
supreme patience in helping me achieve this goal.

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FOREWORD

After completing my course work in City Planning at the University of Manitoba in the spring of 1998, I returned to my home province of British Columbia. I completed this practicum paper while working for local government in BC. That position provided special opportunities to receive data and knowledge towards a fuller understanding of the practicum topic. However, I also believe that my position in local government has imposed some limits or constraints to the practicum paper. One of the difficulties of writing a paper such as this one, while working in the midst of local government, has been an increased sense of caution at expressing what may be construed as a contrary opinion. This has meant that I have held myself back from being too critical of current local and regional government practices. Had I completed this work immediately following my course work, I believe I may have been more critical throughout my evaluation of regional planning practice.

This practicum and my planning experience have exposed me to the legislative weaknesses associated with the provincial government move toward comprehensive regional planning. I have experienced frustration with the apparent lack of a mandated content of the Regional Growth Strategies legislation. It has appeared to me that the legislation has presented great potential to change and influence regional planning, yet it fails to do so due to

a lack of mandated content. My focus on sustainable development has, in part, allowed me to address these frustrations by identifying and promoting the concept of sustainable development for its application to planning practice in British Columbia.

Ideas and methods for managing regional growth must be dealt with on a regional scale, but my experience has suggested that it may prove to be difficult to remove past inter-jurisdictional disagreements between municipalities and regional districts. I believe that the successful adoption of a regional growth strategy cannot occur before a consensus among affected parties (i.e. regional districts and member municipalities) becomes a more focused reality.

Finally, the content of this paper did not provide a focused discussion on the involvement of First Nations towards the development of a regional growth strategy. Despite this omission, I would readily acknowledge that the formal involvement of the First Nations in such efforts would prove both crucial and beneficial to the planning and development of a regional growth strategy. This would also help to ensure comprehensive growth management policies would be developed in an more equitable and 'complete' fashion. The involvement of First Nations would also prove to be a great ally in developing an ecologically sustainable development initiative.

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Acronyms

BC – British Columbia
CVRD – Cowichan Valley Regional District
GSA – Growth Strategies Act
GMP – Growth Management Plan
MMA – Ministry of Municipal Affairs (BC)
RDCO – Regional District of Central Okanagan
RDEK – Regional District of East Kootenay
RDN – Regional District of Nanaimo
RGS – Regional Growth Strategy
TNRD – Thompson-Nicola Regional District

CHAPTER 1

GROWTH MANAGEMENT STRATEGISING: The Sustainable Development Research Problem and the Practical Programming Response

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This practicum represents an effort to research the problem of how to achieve growth management strategising, in a rapidly-growing, rural/non-metropolitan setting, within a prescribed 'sustainable development' framework. Are the two agendas - growth management and sustainable development - compatible or contradictory? Can they be meshed or reconciled in practice and if so, how? The practicum examines the Regional Growth Strategies legislation in the *Local Government Act* to determine if it has significantly advanced long-term planning for sustainable development in British Columbia.

The research has also been designed to inform the practical problem of how a particular Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) project might be generally strategised, and specifically programmed in the current context of a rural regional district in British Columbia. It features an evaluation of the programming of the Regional District of Nanaimo's (RDN) Growth Management Plan to identify and develop a menu of sorts, for growth strategies in rural regional districts in the Province. The operative practical question is therefore: What can be learned from the process of development

and adoption of the RDN Growth Management Plan that might contribute to growth strategising for a rural regional district in British Columbia experiencing a high rate of population growth?

1.1 GROWTH MANAGEMENT IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

In British Columbia there has been a fairly recent specific government response to the population growth occurring in several regions around the province. Strategising regional growth management seems to be a new development in British Columbia, as various regional districts strive to incorporate it into their planning systems, following the stimulus of recent enabling provincial legislation.

It is true that Regional Growth Strategies are relatively new for almost all of the regional districts in the province, but the principles underlying the legislation (part 25 *Local Government Act*) are already familiar to many local planners. Regional planning to manage growth pressures in BC has been a possibility since the original formation of regional districts in the mid-1960s. Regional districts were given a mandate to plan on a regional scale, until an early 1980s difference in opinion between the Greater Vancouver Regional District and the then provincial government (over regional policy application relating to agricultural land development). This resulted in the Province rescinding planning authority from regional districts province-wide in 1983.

In the early 1990s, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs consulted with planners, local government officials, non-government organizations, and individuals on growth strategising on a regional scale. This consultation and related information exchanges resulted in a discussion paper entitled " Growth Strategies for the 1990s and Beyond". Published in 1994, five thousand copies were distributed to: local government officials; environmental, social, business and agricultural organizations; members of the general public; professional planners; other government agencies; and First Nations (Lidstone 1996: 4).

In January 1995 the Ministry of Municipal Affairs released a draft document for growth strategising in BC entitled "Growth Strategies Act Draft Legislation, 1995", based on submissions received from more than 300 local government officials that participated in regional workshops (Ibid). The Ministry of Municipal Affairs held a public workshop in Vancouver, five regional meetings with the Planning Institute of British Columbia, meetings with other government ministries and agencies, among others, before enacting the new legislation, which offered regional districts and municipalities a direct planning response to growth.

The Ministry of Municipal Affairs (MMA) then developed the *Growth Strategies Act* (GSA), which was proclaimed in June 1995 (B.C Ministry of Municipal Affairs [a] 1998). The GSA was incorporated into the *Municipal Act*

(now the *Local Government Act*). It represented a 'made in BC' effort towards strategising for growth and it was born out of extensive review of North American precedents. The growth strategies legislation offers a practical framework for co-ordinated planning and action between and among the provincial, regional and local levels of government in BC.

The provincial government believed that this legislation would be very important because it considered growth to be the single most powerful force propelling economic and social change in the province (BC Ministry of Municipal Affairs [a] 1998). The GSA can be viewed as a new wave of thinking for the provincial government in BC because it has embraced quality of life issues and set out criteria that could potentially help alleviate growth-related problems, via strategising together to guide communities in a region to a better future. The GSA legislation engages a number of priority growth management issues including: sustainability, public involvement, housing, transportation, economic development, the environment, parks and open space, governance and political leadership.

The provincial government in BC felt that there was a need for co-ordinated planning among all the jurisdictions across BC because planning for growth was usually only done within local jurisdictional boundaries. The local government structure in BC did not promote a clear, reliable consensus on growth management because municipalities only dealt with what was

happening within their boundaries, while the regional districts had mainly to account for the development that was taking place in unincorporated areas. However, the fact is that growth-related problems and challenges do not neatly respect such political boundaries (B.C Ministry of Municipal Affairs [a] May 1998: 1).

The drafters of GSA sought to alleviate this approach to planning by encouraging or requiring co-operation among local governments, at least in strategic terms, to deal with the problematic challenges brought on by growth. The GSA legislation promotes participatory strategy development through an active partnership with vital local government forces and community residents. It recognizes the important role of local governments in moving towards more sustainable development while attempting to maximize their local autonomy in managing human settlement within their jurisdiction. Provincial representatives believe the legislation to be very important:

The biggest challenges facing many communities today can be traced to rapid, poorly coordinated growth. Growth is the single most powerful force propelling economic and social change in the province. Growth can benefit our communities if it is channeled in a way that respects what's important to all British Columbians - clear air, affordable housing, clean drinking water, protected farmland, wilderness, and unique natural areas. The challenges of growth require concerted action by all levels of government, the business community, interest groups and individuals. Our quality of life is critically important. British Columbians aren't prepared to accept unbounded suburban sprawl, threats to sensitive wildlife and vegetation habitats, traffic gridlock or the continued blurring of city and countryside. More of the same isn't acceptable. We're overdue for a new way of thinking (B.C Ministry of Municipal Affairs 1998:1).

This legislation lays out the ground rules for three important new planning tools - each of which correspond to one of the stages of the GSA growth management process. First there is the *Regional Growth Strategy* (RGS) - a long-term (minimum of 20 years) comprehensive strategy that addresses the means by which affected municipalities and regional districts achieve a course of action to meet common social, economic and environmental objectives at a broad policy level. It is initiated and adopted by a regional district and referred to all affected local governments for acceptance. Secondly, the *Regional Context Statement* (RCS) forms a portion of a municipality's official community plan, and sets out the relationship between the Regional Growth Strategy and the municipality's own plan. This statement is prepared by the municipality and referred to the regional district for acceptance. The third new planning tool that the GMA legislation sets out is the *Implementation Agreement* (IA) - a partnership agreement between a regional district and other levels of government, their agencies or other bodies, which spells out the details of how certain aspects of a Regional Growth Strategy will be carried out (BC Ministry of Municipal Affairs 1998: 1,2).

Under the GSA legislation, the Province has developed a set of goals that each Regional Growth Strategy must work towards. These goals relate to the current context of sustainable development. This context can be recognized as an important element in the successful implementation of a

regional growth strategy. More important though is how a region can actually undertake programming of a growth strategy that explicitly attempts to work towards sustainability in a regional context. This practicum attempts to take up this challenge. The growth strategies legislation is, intentionally, not specific on the process for, or detailed content of, a regional growth strategy. The reason for this is that the province has recognised that each regional district has different needs and goals.

1.2 GROWTH MANAGEMENT IN THE REGIONAL DISTRICT OF NANAIMO

The Regional District of Nanaimo completed a Regional Growth Management Plan in January, 1997 and the Planning Institute of British Columbia recognized the RDN's programming efforts with the Comprehensive Policy and Planning Award, for providing leadership in the area of growth management planning (B.C Ministry of Municipal Affairs [a] September 1998).

"Nanaimo's growth strategy identifies: strong urban containment; a vibrant and sustainable economy; efficient service and resource use; nodal community structure; protection of the natural environment; improved mobility; protection of rural integrity; and cooperation among jurisdictions, as the primary goals to be addressed over the life of the plan. Given that development of urban containment boundaries is the first priority for the regional district, the growth strategy sets out a strong policy direction and framework of mapped land use designation designed to support land use decisions and local level planning. The plan ensures that growth will continue and provides certainty as to where it will occur" (B.C Ministry of Municipal Affairs [a] September 1998:9).

The programming of the RDN Growth Management Plan was completed with extensive collaboration between local governments and the provincial government. It also included extensive public consultation. Work on the RDN Growth Management Plan began in 1993, before the GSA legislation was finalised. In many ways, the RDN programming experience was more elaborate than what the Ministry of Municipal Affairs now thinks is required for a regional growth strategy (Hawksworth, 2000). However, in 1993 when the RDN first set out its Terms of Reference for the growth management project, there was no preconceived idea on the part of the Province of British Columbia as to how a regional district might approach the programming, or development of a growth strategy. The RDN Growth Management Plan was tailored to the needs and circumstances of that region. The research reported herein indicates that the programming efforts involved in the creation of the RDN Growth Management Plan was extensive but does not seem to offer an entirely exemplary template for more rural regions across BC.

This research project evaluates both the provincial Growth Strategies legislation and the RDN case in an attempt to articulate appropriate programming for a regional growth strategy in a more rural, non-metropolitan, regional district, such as the Regional District of East Kootenay. The intention is, in part, to specifically benefit a distinct practicum "client interest", namely, the provincial government's Growth Strategies Office in British

Columbia. Ultimately, through the Growth Strategies Office, other beneficiaries could be other rural regional districts and their member municipalities, in the form of growth strategy programming recommendations for the consideration of their planning staff and elected or appointed officials.

1.3 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND REGIONAL GROWTH STRATEGY PROGRAMMING

Contemporary growth management strategies in BC, as well as current practice in North America, may or may not be closely tied to the principles of “sustainable development”. The relationship is not usually explicit, though it may be implicit. A Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) under the Regional Growth Strategies legislation may be interpreted as seeking to reach goals consistent with sustainable development; that is, development which is socially, economically, and environmentally healthy, and that contributes to the efficient use of public facilities and services, land and other resources (BC Ministry of Municipal Affairs 1998). ‘Sustainability’ became a popular buzz-word in the 1990s. The strengthening of the environmental movement has brought this concept to the forefront of decision-making on development. However, due to the relative novelty of this term, sustainability has many definitions, approaches and meanings attached to it. It often seems that everyone’s perspective of sustainability varies, but all advocates of the concept seem to have one common goal - the ability of humankind to preserve or sustain itself over time.

The question often arises, whether growth management and sustainable development are compatible or contradictory? The fact is that since the inception of growth management practice in the 1970s, the majority of growth management programs have been oriented toward allowing, facilitating, or actually mandating ongoing growth accommodation. They have featured the accommodation of continuing growth rather than its curtailment (Zovanyi 1998). One of the defining characteristics of sustainability in most dictionaries is 'the ability to be continued'. Since continuous physical growth is not possible in a finite world, it may be said that continuous growth is 'unsustainable'. Therefore, a growth management strategy that strives to accommodate ongoing physical growth is apparently in direct contradiction to a sustainable development agenda. However, it would be very difficult to determine whether ongoing growth can actually be managed in a way that would actually maintain healthy communities and sustain a high quality of life for their members.

The Regional Growth Strategies legislation reflects the provincial government's belief that sustainable development does not represent a finite limit to growth. The provincial government does not regard growth strategies as necessarily promoting growth in regions across BC. The emphasis of the legislation is on interjurisdictional co-ordination to address shared settlement-related issues (Hawksworth, 2000).

Others have also attempted to undermine the argument that ongoing growth is unsustainable. They argue that if limits to growth are introduced in a particular region it will only benefit those who already live in the growth-controlled community, but will harm others. They contend that limits ultimately contribute little to environmental quality, since growth is merely diverted to other locations that do not endorse growth control (Deakin 1991: 5).

Those who do advocate the introduction of limits to growth take the position that if a growth management strategy holds to a pro-growth commitment, or 'accommodation', the strategy would run counter to some of the current thinking concerning sustainable development, because the resulting population increases and physical development would eventually exceed the carrying capacity of a particular location. The real question is whether growth controls, or limits to growth, have worked in regions, cities or local communities. Deakin (1991) responds:

"many growth control efforts have indeed been effective – in protecting sensitive lands, preserving open space, financing public infrastructure, slowing traffic growth. Yet broader questions of effectiveness – whether the programs are working as intended, are scoped appropriately, and have reasonable benefit – cost ratios – remain largely unaddressed" (Deakin 1991: 7).

To adequately evaluate the effectiveness of growth controls, or placing limits on growth, would entail a very detailed examination involving many factors. This type of evaluation represents a daunting task and this practicum does

not try to determine how well growth controls work. It does, however, attempt to determine a way in which growth management strategizing can be meshed or reconciled in practice with the attributes of sustainability. At the same time it tries to come to terms with the possibility that we as a society are not yet ready for a “no-growth” stance in our communities.

1.4 RESEARCH FOCUS

Structured as a practicum to specifically benefit existing provincial, regional district and municipal planning staff, the research focuses on the problem of how to practically achieve growth management strategising, in a growing, rural/non-metropolitan setting, within an implicit provincially-prescribed ‘sustainable development’ framework. It references a local/regional context where there is limited experience with, or capacity for, such strategising. This study also incorporates an investigation of whether growth management and sustainable development are complementary (in the sense of being compatible) or contradictory, and considers the appropriate ‘how’ response for programmers expected to enable some form of public action.

The research entails an exploration of a different kind of future development, compared with the status quo, in rural British Columbia. It examines the possibility that a rural regional district board could pioneer new approaches to sustainable regional development, via their land management authority, through a regional growth strategy. The mainly rural nature of many regional

districts in British Columbia provides opportunities to confront significant growth challenges or issues shared by municipalities and unincorporated communities in a region. It is up to each regional district board to assume responsibility, and to marshal the resources needed to successfully address current and possible future problems.

This practicum is centered on an evaluation of the programming of the Regional District of Nanaimo's Growth Management Plan, in terms of the actual process of creating a 'regional growth strategy'. This included an evaluation of the co-operation between governments, public involvement and support, and the resources needed in a regional governance setting to pursue such a strategy. It evaluates the final product of the RDN Growth Management Plan to determine if it has significantly advanced long-term planning for sustainable development in the region. It also examines how the RDN could possibly be more ambitious in their future programming for their Regional Growth Plan updates or periodic reviews. In particular, the research seeks to furnish a perspective that may be needed by the Regional District of Nanaimo's Board to explicitly plan for a greater measure of sustainable development in the future.

There is also an evaluation of the transferability of the RDN growth management program experience to other rural non-metropolitan regional districts in British Columbia. The RDN growth management program

experience is used, in particular, to inform the development of a program option for attaining a growth strategy in the Regional District of East Kootenay.

There has been a prime concern with two underlying sets of questions:

Are the two agendas - growth management and sustainable development - compatible or contradictory? Can they be meshed or reconciled in practice in rural non-metropolitan regional district settings, in the context of programming a RGS project, and if so, how?

How can the award-winning RDN Growth Management Plan be used as a template to develop growth strategies for other rural regional districts in British Columbia that are also experiencing a high rate of growth?

Related to these questions is another aspect of the research agenda, namely accomplishing the following set of limiting or clarifying objectives

- to base the evaluation on a balance of relevant theory and case studies, with particular reference to BC sources;
- to attempt to distinguish between conventional planning approaches and what has been termed 'growth management strategising', and between conventional development and what has been termed 'sustainable development';
- to distinguish between a 'plan' and a 'strategy';
- to attempt to distinguish between 'technologically' sustainable development and 'ecologically' sustainable development;
- to distinguish between quantitative growth or expansion, and qualitative growth or improvement;
- to achieve growth management strategising, in a rapidly-growing, rural/non-metropolitan setting, within a prescribed 'sustainable development' framework; and
- to articulate a regional growth strategy program option that can plausibly deliver useful outcomes for a rural regional district in BC.

1.5 PRACTICAL APPLICATION OF THE RESEARCH

The research first identifies operational measures for growth management and sustainable development , and then focuses on an evaluation of the Regional District of Nanaimo's Regional Growth Management Plan programming experience in this regard. An evaluation of the Regional District's programming efforts, in terms of advancing long-term planning for sustainable development, is attempted. This involved key informant interviews with planners for the RDN, the City of Nanaimo, and the Ministry of Municipal Affairs Growth Strategies Office. It also involved secondary analysis of the public survey results on growth management issues in the RDN, published by Research Ltd. and Westland Resource Group, (consultants for the programming of the RDN Growth Management Plan). The results of this analysis are presented in chapter three of this practicum.

After evaluating the RDN case there is an examination of how critical factors and principles could be successfully employed to develop regional growth strategies, or more integrated strategic planning, in other more rural areas around BC, with a specific focus on the Regional District of East Kootenay. Regardless of population trends, there is value in separate jurisdictions taking a co-ordinated strategic approach to common regional issues.

Many of the more rural areas in BC do not face exactly the same growth pressures as the RDN example, and may not have to engage the full scope

of the programming associated with the RDN case. However, there is value in researching how these areas might achieve systematic co-ordination of priorities, and overall planning amongst local and provincial governments, to address common issues and to achieve a shared vision on how to effectively deal with any future population change. The practical application then, revolves around an effort to exploit the legislatively-enabled opportunity to better manage growth. It entails using programming elements from the RDN case which might actually work for and benefit some of the more rural areas of BC, while still building on the strengths and sentiments of the growth strategy legislation.

1.6 RESEARCH STRATEGY

The research was conducted using a targeted literature review, referencing the evolution and programming of growth management strategies with particular interest in the BC context. Also, the concept of sustainable development, or the related notion of developing sustainably, has been reviewed to identify the relationship between sustainable development and growth management strategies. The literature review addresses the elements, components and patterns of growth management and sustainable development, to inform the possible programming of a Regional Growth Strategy in a rural non-metropolitan area. The primary research focuses on the process-programming and strategy-building associated with the Regional District of Nanaimo's Growth Management Plan.

The RDN Growth Management Plan was initially identified as an appropriate case for this study because it was one of the first regions in BC to commence a growth management initiative while illustrating some of the issues of growth management planning in BC. The case study begins with a detailed description of the RDN physical setting. The analysis references the growth management issues and the programming for growth strategising in the RDN. The case study is explained through a chronology of the programming of the Growth Management Plan and the major events following completion and adoption. There is also an examination of specific aspects of the RDN case to identify any transferability to other regional districts in BC, and to consider whether the RDN programmed its Regional Growth Management Plan under any prescribed sustainable development framework.

The case study used extensive, multiple sources of to provide a detailed in-depth picture of the RDN experience. This was accomplished through a wide array of data collection procedures such as direct observation, semi-structured interviews, and examination of documents and reports, over a three-year period from March 1998 to March 2001(Creswell 1998).

The direct observation for this study was done in part through field research when I was living in Duncan and working for the Cowichan Valley Regional District (CVRD), which borders the RDN. There was direct interaction between the RDN and the CVRD on growth management issues.

Data collection included interviews with key informants, featuring individuals who have been involved in the implementation of a Regional Growth Strategy in other jurisdictions in British Columbia. They include key individuals from the Regional District of Nanaimo, Regional District of Central Okanagan, City of Nanaimo, Thompson-Nicola Regional District and the provincial Municipal Affairs Growth Strategies Office. For a rural regional perspective interviews were conducted with Tom Anderson, Director of Planning, Cowichan Valley Regional District, and Bob Whetham, Director of Planning, Regional District of East Kootenay.

These were structured telephone and personal interviews where an interview protocol was designed (Appendix A) (Creswell 1998). The entire protocol was introduced to the interviewees before the telephone interview to allow them time to structure their responses to the questions and allow them to become better acquainted with the study. The interview protocol was six pages in length with fourteen open-ended questions and ample space between questions for the researcher or the respondent to record responses to the interviewee's comments (Creswell 1998). The time-frame for each telephone and personal interview was approximately one hour. All of the information collected from the personal and telephone interviews was recorded using shorthand notes. Some of the interviewees chose to complete the interview protocol personally on their own time and returned their responses via fax or email.

The individuals interviewed were probed for their technical or political knowledge in terms of facts, opinions, or anecdotes, which might inform the 'best practice' programming of a regional growth strategy in a rural location (Creswell 1998). The interview data were analyzed in terms of the barriers, opportunities, and tradeoffs associated with plausible programming scenarios under the Regional Growth Strategies legislation. There was a particular interest in discovering successful factors or principles that could be employed to develop growth strategies, or integrated strategic planning initiatives, in more rural areas of BC.

The study of the RDN case used a number of documents and reports to gain a detailed appreciation of the case. This included a series of technical studies undertaken by Westland Resource Group, which provided information on various issues associated with growth and growth management in the RDN. It also included a number of documents and reports that were developed by the RDN staff with information on what the Growth Management Plan involved, and how it was going to be programmed. It also included interim update reports that reviewed the RDN Growth Management Plan's progress. Finally, it included the 'Taking Action' quarterly publication of the Ministry of Municipal Affairs that examines the development of growth strategies across BC. This newsletter has monitored the RDN Growth Management Plan since its adoption in 1996.

Participant observation has also been drawn upon to examine present planning methods employed in the rural setting of the Regional District of East Kootenay and to consider how current methods of dealing with growth could possibly be changed (Creswell 1998). The researcher has several years of employment experience in two rural regional districts in BC, including the Regional District of East Kootenay. The researcher worked for the CVRD for four months each summer in 1997 and 1998. I first worked as a Planning Assistant compiling information on various growth management initiatives in BC, Canada and the United States to develop programming options for a growth management strategy in the CVRD. This experience allowed me to gain access to materials, information, and opportunities for interviews with those people who were directly involved in the development of the RDN Growth Management Plan. In April 1999, I started working as a Planning Technician for the RDEK. This is the position that I am currently working in, and the experience has exposed me to all facets of planning in a rural setting. It has also allowed me opportunities to access materials and information relating to growth management strategising in BC. The position has allowed me to more easily access key individuals for interviews partly because I am collecting information on behalf of the RDEK. My current employment in the planning profession may impose potential biases. This professional experience has provided an insider position on planning for a rural setting in BC.

1.7 STUDY LIMITATIONS AND ASSUMPTIONS

To better focus and manage the research, the following limitations or assumptions were observed:

- The research examines the programming of a Growth Management Strategy on a regional scale, in the sense of a multiplicity of (Electoral Area) jurisdictions and constituent municipalities, in the BC regional district context.
- The focus of this research is to determine not so much the programming of growth management as the programming for growth strategy development in a mainly rural context. The research does not try to evaluate the effectiveness or otherwise of growth management in practice.
- The research attempts to examine programming options addressing different levels of sustainability in growth management contexts, to explore how greater measures of sustainability could be programmed and operationalised, beyond – and as possible extension of – a 'base case' politically feasible, programming strategy.
- The research focuses on the transferability of the Regional District of Nanaimo's Growth Management Plan to address growth strategising in predominantly rural non-metropolitan areas in British Columbia.

- Key informants include those individuals that have been involved in growth strategy development programming in jurisdictions, or in roles that are relevant to the rural/ non-metropolitan region context.
- The analytical focus is on needed changes in terms of a better, if not more sensible practice, from the current status quo approach to growth management (as development servicing) in rural regions in British Columbia.
- The scope of the programming will be limited to a recommended option for growth strategising, covering the critical program elements and process steps, rather than a detailed analysis of every sub-component and sub-step.

1.8 STRUCTURE OF THE PRACTICUM REPORT

The structure of the practicum is based on a series of attempts to answer specific research questions, which in turn inform the relationship between growth management and sustainable development. A case study evaluation of the Regional District of Nanaimo's Growth Management programming experiences is also presented, with an underlying aim to better flesh out a particular programming option for growth strategising that effectively deals with 'urban-type' growth management in mainly rural areas in BC.

Chapter 2 examines and analyzes relevant theory relating to sustainable development and growth management, in an attempt to determine if the two terms are contradictory or compatible. It also critiques the BC Regional

Growth Strategies legislation in terms of the theory, and in relation to advancing sustainable development planning in British Columbia.

Chapter 3 evaluates the case of the Regional District of Nanaimo's (RDN) Regional Growth Management Strategy. The research focuses especially on the programming elements of the RDN Growth Management Plan to assess the Regional District's efforts towards advancing long-term planning for sustainable development in the region.

Chapter 4 examines the growth strategies that have been recently adopted by the Regional District of Central Okanagan and Thompson-Nicola Regional District. This analysis informs the present diversity of regional growth strategy development in the BC context. It identifies regional growth strategies that were completely programmed under the BC Regional Growth Strategies legislation and informs a programming option for a regional growth strategy in the Regional District of East Kootenay.

Chapter 5 synthesizes the results of the evaluation of the RDN growth management program and examines the transferability of some of its programming elements to other rural regions in BC. It identifies critical factors or principles that might be successfully employed to develop growth strategies in more rural areas around BC, with a specific focus on the Regional District of East Kootenay. The analysis forms the basis of a

programming option for growth strategising in rural non-metropolitan regional districts. It also underpins a proposed programming option that may successfully achieve co-ordinated strategic planning, in co-operation with other local and senior government agencies.

Chapter 6 summarizes the findings of the research with respect to the initial problem statements and questioning perspectives. It considers possible candidate policy for the BC Government, Regional District of Nanaimo, and rural regional districts in BC that wish to develop or improve on efforts towards developing a regional growth strategy that truly operates within a sustainable development framework. It also provides recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER 2

RELATING GROWTH MANAGEMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: EMERGING THEORY AND PRECEDENT

2.0 INTRODUCTION

In an attempt to determine if a region in BC may be able to program a growth strategy that operates under a sustainable development framework, it is necessary to critically evaluate the current literature relating to both growth management and sustainable development. The interest in this evaluation is to determine if and how the two concepts can be merged into a single agenda to produce a growth strategy in a rural regional district that is grounded in a sustainable development. This chapter examines the concept of growth management and deals with the associated benefits and possible downsides. It identifies the differences between a land use plan and a regional growth strategy. Finally, it examines the concept of sustainable development, which is a relatively new concept, and identifies current operational measures that help define the term in an attempt to develop a new understanding of 'sustainable development certifiable' growth management strategies.

2.1 THE CONCEPT OF GROWTH MANAGEMENT

Growth management seems to stem from the development trends in North America in the 1950s and 1960s, when many localities and regions were growing rapidly and concern arose over how to accommodate this

burgeoning built environment. It was clear that the traditional tools (general plans, subdivision control, zoning ordinances, and building codes) used by local governments to guide development were - on their own - unsatisfactory, because they did little to manage the impacts of continued growth or cumulative development (Fodor 1999).

Most experts viewed the set of traditional tools as lacking in significant ability to manage or to shape growth, control its timing, or deal with many of its impacts, particularly financial and environmental ones (Deakin 1991). Many growing communities began searching for innovative supplementary means of regulating development, mainly because the local governments could not keep up with the increasing demand for infrastructure and services, and because of the heavy financial costs. This forced many communities to clamp down on development, because it was literally bankrupting their finances, even with the revenue increases from the new development (Ibid).

The concept of growth management emerged mainly in the late 1960s and was further stimulated in North American cities, towns and rural locations by the awakening interest in environmental protection. This was manifested in, for example, small communities fighting to protect their character and lifestyle traits, and by the growing concern over the loss of valuable farmland (Deakin, 1991).

By the 1970s there seemed to be the beginning of an ideological shift away from the attitude that constant growth was something beneficial to communities, because the ill effects of rapid growth - such as loss of open space, congestion, tax increases, higher pollution levels and destruction of quality of life - were becoming common-place. Growth management emerged as an increasingly popular response, tending to endorse a viewpoint "that it is possible to have quantity with quality if future growth is planned and regulated" (Zovanyi 1998: 32). When the term 'growth management' was coined in the late 1960s "it was intended to embrace and expand the ideas of comprehensive planning, zoning and subdivision regulations, and capital improvement programs" (Porter 1996 (a):7). Growth management was seen by many planners as a positive tool to guide regional and community development, rather than as a negative tool used to contain it (Porter 1996 (a)).

During the era from the early 1970s to the late 1980s growth management initiatives began to increasingly acknowledge concepts such as urban sprawl, air pollution, energy shortages and the loss of wild areas and farmlands (Deakin, 1991:4). Over time, through critical academic exploration and considerable practical experience, the concept of growth management was quite generally accepted as a planning and administrative approach to dealing with development and its spin-off problems. The core ideal of growth management programs during this era nevertheless maintained an

allegiance to what Gabor Zovanyi (1998) terms, 'the growth imperative'. This notion reflects the fact that society has long considered economic growth a social good.

In the 1990s growth management programs and projects continued to evolve and expand into new areas and there has been a broad range of experimentation with the concept. The "accommodative" stance of growth management programs or strategies, towards future growth, remained, and continues "on the part of virtually every local government involved in the growth management movement" (Zovanyi, 1998: 46). The focus is on managing and accommodating continued growth in communities in a way that minimizes any negative impacts, while attempting to offer a balance between the demands of population growth and the demands of the natural environment. Gabor Zovanyi (1998) cites evidence of growth management programs that continue to accommodate growth.

"One of the architects of a program in Montgomery County, Maryland conceded that the effort "was intended to *accommodate* growth, and to manage it only to the extent needed to moderate its ill effects". A planner involved in putting together San Diego's programs has noted that "the city hoped neither to limit growth nor allow it to proceed unimpeded... but to *accommodate* it in a manner sensitive to the particular needs of San Diego." (Zovanyi 1998: 47).

Growth management programs or projects were often put in place to address the specific needs of a region and its communities. A growth management program usually supports and articulates a vision of a desirable future region, and programs a strategy for realising the vision. If these growth programs

were effectively implemented, they were thought to be capable of resolving many of the existing problems generated by growth, and possibly help in avoiding many future problems.

Central to the meaning of growth management is a commitment to plan for 'balance' between the protection of the integrity of natural systems and the development required to support growth by expanding residential, commercial, industrial, and retail areas (Porter 1996 (a):7). Growth management is considered to confer significant benefits on communities by developing a strategy that aims to achieve a desirable quality of life in the midst of community growth and change. Growth management has represented a significant attempt to utilize existing and new planning techniques to avoid the loss of open space and resource land, to protect environmentally sensitive lands, and to halt the destruction of community character and way of life.

However, the initial 'balancing' focus seems to have faded, as this concept has not so far been advanced in the context of the more recently articulated notion of sustainable development (Zovanyi 1998). Also, it cannot be claimed that growth management as practiced, rates as a new progressive "movement". The fact is that management of growth - to accommodate ongoing growth - in the form of land use controls such as zoning bylaws,

subdivision regulations, and building codes, dates back to the early 1900s, before the term “ growth management” was ever fashioned.

“In general, growth management plans or systems are made up of elements that have been well known to planners for years. In that sense, there is nothing unique about them...[and] it must be admitted that no absolutely hard line separates growth management from traditional planning” (Zovanyi 1998: 34).

There have been a number of different management objectives associated with growth management strategies. There are those that guide and redistribute growth in order to minimize associated negative impacts; ones that maintain a traditional perspective of promoting growth because it is inevitable, but in a timely manner so that the extra growth has time to assimilate and not destroy the community character; and strategies that use policies to enforce growth containment to avoid sprawl, and that ultimately try to control and even limit growth. One of the possible management objectives that the growth management effort has not addressed is a no-growth stance, because this has been thought by some to be a socially unacceptable choice, which might encourage undesirable social consequences (Zovanyi 1998).

It seems as though many government bodies and the general public still frown upon a ‘no-growth’ stance in a region. Presently, the provincial government in BC is neutral on the concept of no-growth in regions across BC (Hawksworth, 2000). My personal opinion, based on my planning experience to date in rural BC regions, is that there would be little official

recognition of this 'no-growth' position because there is more interest in the positive value of a growth strategy, not in terms of whether there should be growth, but how to achieve a co-ordinated strategic approach between jurisdictions in a region to address common problems related to, or the management of issues associated with, current trends and forms of growth.

2.1.1 DEFINING GROWTH MANAGEMENT

Growth management may be broadly defined as an approach to guide future development within a specific jurisdiction. Although, there is at this time no one generally accepted definition, the term 'growth management' in this research is meant to refer to a local government or regional body adopting measures that influence and/or control the type, location, quality, scale, rate and timing of development. Growth management systems are usually closely tied to comprehensive land use plans and specific development policies (Bollens 1990,1993). Growth management is a proactive (rather than reactive) attempt to guide growth, to ensure that quality of life is not destroyed for existing residents and future generations (Degrove 1992). A common 'spin' on the concept is the following:

"Growth management is not an effort to stop growth, or even necessarily to slow growth. It is a calculated effort by a local government, region or state to achieve a *balance* between natural systems – land, air, and water – and residential, commercial, and industrial development (DeGrove 1991:1).

Growth management is a tool that can be utilized in the larger effort to shape the desired community of tomorrow, based on a vision of the future (Porter

1996). It aims to offset certain imperfections in the land market, and attempts ultimately to lead to policies that achieve an efficient urban form and improve the quality of life through good planning and design (Ibid).

To critically examine the meaning of growth management, it is first necessary to identify and understand the meaning of 'management', which can be found by reference to any dictionary and means "to direct or control the use of ". In order to effectively manage anything there is a requirement for the formulation of a well-conceived strategy to guide future action. For some, such a strategy is best engineered in response to estimates of trends in existing conditions, the definition of goals and objectives, a visualization of workable approaches to achieve these goals, and programming of the investments necessary to implement those approaches (Porter 1996 (b)).

In terms of actually defining 'growth', it is often considered problematic to only focus on population expansion. 'Growth' typically involves the increase of population and economic prosperity (for some at least), which naturally leads to increased demands for housing, schools, roads, workplaces and services (Porter 1996 (a)). These increased demands tend to lead to the exploitation of land and natural resources (Lewis 1996).

There are two basic approaches to growth management that are very different, but which seem to be potentially compatible and even

complementary. One is focused on 'how' growth should occur, while the other is concerned with 'whether' growth should occur at all (Fodor 1999). Both approaches should be part of a long-term management plan project because they both have programming implications that will benefit a community (Ibid).

The first approach, the focus on how, is sometimes referred to as 'planned growth' or 'smart growth' (Fodor 1999: 27). The main goal of this approach is to try to positively influence the quality of the growth, while minimizing the negative effects. The key lies in directing new development in ways that will reduce negative impacts on resource lands, environmental quality, quality of life and other qualities associated with communities (Fodor 1999).

Comprehensive planning and policy frameworks are used as the technical tools to anticipate and accommodate growth, and to deal with it in an effective, efficient and equitable manner. Most of the growth management strategies and plans in effect today assimilate this approach. The main problem with this approach is that it does not attempt to address the question of the quantity of growth that is desirable (Ibid).

The second approach to growth management deals with whether growth should occur at all, and, if so, how much and how fast. This approach has sometimes been referred to as 'finite-world planning' (Fodor 1999:27). It recognizes that there are limits to growth in a finite world. It assumes that we

may be able to identify an optimal size for all communities, or at least a maximum size beyond which the quality of life for residents will decline. This approach identifies communities that are growing too fast, as well as those that have already exceeded their optimal size, and focuses on the need to slow their rate of growth.

Within these two basic approaches there are a number of different operational definitions associated with growth management. Douglas Porter (1996 (a)) in his book Profiles in Growth Management, outlines some specific definitions of growth management

- Volume I of *Management & Control of Growth* states that managed growth means

"the utilization by government of a variety of traditional and evolving techniques, tools, plans, and activities to purposefully guide local patterns of land use, including the manner, location, rate, and nature of development " (Porter, 1996 (a): 5).

- The authors of *Constitutional Issues of Growth Management* define growth management as

"a conscious government program intended to influence the rate, amount, type, location, and / or quality of future development within a local jurisdiction."

They go on to note that practitioners intend growth management

"to influence certain characteristics of growth and {use} a variety of governmental policies, plans, regulations, and management techniques ..." (Porter, 1996 (a): 5).

- Ben Chinitz has framed a seemingly more incisive and comprehensive definition

"Growth management is active and dynamic...; it seeks to maintain an ongoing equilibrium between development and conservation, between various forms of development and concurrent provision of infrastructure, between the demands for public services generated by growth and the supply of revenues to finance those demands, and between progress and equity" (Porter, 1996 (a): 5)

- The Urban Land Institute's Growth Problems Task Force defined *effective* growth management as

"a dynamic process for anticipating and accommodating development needs that balances competing land use goals and coordinates local with regional interests." (Porter, 1996 (a): 5)

All of these definitions point to several key aspects of growth management.

The first aspect that tends to be conveyed throughout all of the definitions is the fact that **growth management is an ever-evolving practice and a dynamic process that has to be continuously modified to effectively deal with current and anticipated development trends.**

Second, the definitions do not attempt to convey that growth management is a way of stopping or limiting expected growth, rather the opposite, in that it is portrayed as **a proactive growth-acknowledging approach that seeks to provide a means to effectively accommodate development pressures.**

The fact that these programs are focused on anticipating the future development needs for land, infrastructure, and services allows local or regional governments to structure their actions and policies to ensure that these needs will be met, but in an efficient and equitable manner.

Third, growth management programs offer a forum and a **process where competing development goals can be identified and where an appropriate balance can be worked out between these competing interest groups**. Douglas Porter (1996 (a)) believes such programs represent an opportunity to weigh public interests against the private property rights. Growth management programs have to provide for the mediation of all sides of a development action or proposal, to effectively initiate a process that produces equitable solutions. This is achieved through the development of policy to help guide future development decisions and workable plans.

Fourth, growth management programs **deal with competing inter-jurisdictional land use goals and offer a forum for local governments to coordinate with a regional agenda**, because these local jurisdictions usually operate, whether they accept it or not, within the context of a regional economy and regional social networks.

Growth management is recognized as a political process where local government officials actively engage their communities to try to identify a community consensus about where future development should be located, how it should be built, what the population densities should be, and what quality standards it should follow. The local governments develop growth management strategies and policy frameworks to effectively guide any political decisions concerning the maintenance of, or the creation of, a livable

community. Douglas Porter (1996 (a)) explains that not all growth management initiatives are complex; some may be simple, depending on different area circumstances:

“Some planners think of growth management as a more proactive form of urban planning – that is, growth management incorporates action programs that go beyond mere plans and regulations. In practical terms, however growth management should be viewed as a collection of plans, programs, and regulations that does the job the community needs to do. If community objectives are achievable through the use of basic planning techniques, those will constitute a satisfactory growth management program”(Porter,1996 (a):7).

In the current practicum context, for example, it is possible that some basic integrated strategic planning may be sufficient, rather than a more elaborate and formal regional growth strategy.

2.1.2 BENEFITS AND POSSIBLE DOWNSIDES OF GROWTH MANAGEMENT

Growth management initiatives can offer significant benefits to communities.

Their ultimate goal is to “achieve a desirable quality of life in the midst of community growth and change” (Porter,1996 (a):14). Growth management initiatives can address the natural environment as well as the built environment. These initiatives help anticipate future needs (social and economic) to instil a degree of certainty and predictability in the development process. High quality development standards may be established to contribute long-term value to a community.

However, growth management initiatives may have possible disadvantages or downsides. They can impose constraints on private sector initiatives, push growth on other regions that do not have a growth management strategy, increase the time and effort required to obtain a development permit, increase development costs, may increase housing and land prices, and impose large administrative requirements. As a result of such 'downsides' Douglas Porter (1996 (a)) states that "most growth management programs are less comprehensive in scope and less systematically structured than the concept suggests" (Porter,1996 (a):15).

Some growth management strategies have focused on infrastructure provision concurrency, and promoting economic development where it is needed, instead of dealing primarily with the need for environmental and natural area planning, or for affordable housing and transportation planning. The environmental movement in the 1970s may seem to have sparked the growth management "movement" as a response, but Gabor Zovanyi (1998) explains "that there seems to be other objectives, such as controlling sprawl, limiting the cost of public improvements, or design-control measures and housing issues, that have diverted attention away from the initial environmental impetus" (Zovanyi, 1998: 134).

The evolution of growth management strategies seems to indicate that these initiatives mainly focus on 'how' to accommodate growth with few adverse

impacts, and certainly not to hinder it. And the accommodation of continued growth mainly entails directing it in ways that minimize its negative impacts (Fodor 1999:106).

Elizabeth Deakin (1991) explains that there is a wide array of growth management measures in use today, but the problem with them is that they are all based on the accumulation of traditional environmental, fiscal, and capacity-related regulations. Many communities feel they have accommodated enough growth, are now looking for ways to actively discourage it, and are seeking to sustain what they presently have for the enjoyment of future generations. Rural communities that are not experiencing the same growth pressures (as more urban locations) are also looking for ways to maintain the quality of life they presently have for future generations. However, they have generally preferred limited planning and regulation towards this end. Perhaps a more general 'strategy' approach – rather than a heavy initial focus on plans and regulations, will prove more acceptable.

2.1.3 REGIONAL GROWTH STRATEGIES AND GENERAL PLANS

There is a significant difference between regional growth strategies and general plans (master plan, land use plan, municipal plan, official community plans). The difference between regional growth strategies and general plans is an important distinction for this study because they each have roles in governing a community or region. Making the distinction between the two

terms is necessary because they commit regional districts and affected municipalities in BC to a particular course of action to meet the goals, objectives and/or vision of a broader area. Generally, plans are substantive in focus for a local community scale and require intensive analysis and programming. They are used as a general policy guide to ensure compliance with community goals and objectives (Hodge 1996). By contrast, regional growth strategies are "long-term vision statements, that are limited and focused on key issues that must be managed at the regional scale" (B.C Ministry of Municipal Affairs [a] February 1996: 5). Growth strategies deal with issues that are touched on by an official community plan, but there can be more focus on significant regional issues (i.e. water quality).

A general plan is a comprehensive, long-term declaration of purposes, goals, policies and objectives for the development of an area (Hodge 1996). They provide direction for government decision-makers, developers, and others as to the planning of land use and the controls placed on physical development. A general plan is a prescriptive document that covers several different elements of the development of a community in BC (Ibid.). Such plans are focused on all significant factors, physical and non-physical, local and regional, that affect the physical growth and development of a community (ibid.). A general plan is developed via a thorough deliberation between government agencies and affected general public. There is also a substantive focus on analyses of current conditions, forecasts of future

conditions, community objectives, population statistics, economic development, and land use to define the range of possibilities for development in a community. In BC, general plans are legal documents that are prepared under provincial legislation. Therefore, all development "must be consistent with the relevant plan" (*Local Government Act*, Section 884 (2)).

A regional growth strategy is not a regional scale 'plan', rather it "provides a regional framework for individual community plans and a link to the plans and actions of other levels of government "(Capital Regional District, 2000:2). A regional growth strategy establishes agreement on a regional vision and common social, economic, and environmental objectives, at a regional scale (Capital Regional District, 2000). It stresses co-operation and a collaborative partnership between the regional district, their member municipalities and other stakeholders. It is designed to build on shared regional objectives in an effort to define goals and priorities, enabling a region to make clear choices for action to manage regional growth in the future. It provides a framework for joint agreements on key regional issues related to growth, settlement, and development. A region is usually made up of many different communities and each of those communities has goals and expectations about the human and physical environment that may not be met on a local scale, but which could be provided for by a regional outlook. Regional growth strategies can plan for these regional matters and help shape long-term settlement in a

preferred direction. A regional growth strategy is limited in scope because it only focuses on the key issues that must be managed on a regional scale. In BC, there are essential elements that must be addressed according to the Regional Growth Strategies legislation:

- a statement on the future of the region, including social, economic and environmental objectives;
- population and employment projections; and
- actions to meet the needs of future residents in relation to
 - Housing
 - Transportation
 - Regional District Services
 - Parks and Natural Areas; and
 - Economic Development

(Local Government Act, Part 25, Section 850)

A regional growth strategy will generally include population projections, a regional statement (vision statement) of a preferred future, an agenda for action to meet objectives on the key regional issues (policy), and a description of a preferred settlement pattern, long-term goals and priorities for the region. A strategy is about cataloguing and defining the obstacles, as identified through public consultation, with a view to defining actions.

Specifically, those actions which can be undertaken by regional district, provincial and affected municipality staff, and those which need to be undertaken by the public or organized groups or agencies such as Health Boards, School Boards, Improvement Districts, and First Nations. A growth strategy seems to co-ordinate agreements between local governments and

links a variety of local management agendas on key aspects of growth into one common regional management agenda, to shape and possibly achieve a vision of a better future.

2.2 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF SUSTAINABILITY

The notion of sustainable development is intriguing because it has many possible meanings for different people. It is a term that is very difficult to categorically define because it embraces many different disciplines and approaches. To advance the concept of sustainable development in land use planning would involve a government adopting a common definition of the term and defining a legislated regulatory planning practice to ensure compliance. This has not happened in BC. Therefore, this study attempts to define sustainable development with respect to identifying the actual or possible relationship with growth management strategising.

Sustainable development first emerged in the literature in the early 1970s (Beatley and Manning 1997) and was broadly popularised in the late 1980s by a series of publications (Zovanyi 1998). This overview focuses on whether any of the meanings and operational measures associated with sustainable development can be associated with the objectives of growth management strategies.

Arguably, the most influential publication focusing on sustainable development was produced by the World Commission on Environment and Development in 1987 under the title, *Our Common Future*. The Brundtland Report, as it was known, provided a definition of sustainable development as “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (Zovanyi, 1998: 146). This definition has been elaborated by Herman Daly (1996) in the following terms (as interpreted by Lidstone):

“A sustainable human settlement is one that does not place greater demands on the ecosystem than what the ecosystem can sustain through natural regenerative processes. That is, renewable resource use must not exceed regeneration rates; consumption or disposal of non-renewable resources must not exceed the renewable substitution rate; and pollution emissions must not exceed the assimilative capacity of the ecosystem” (Lidstone 1996:1).

More recently, the United States National Commission on the Environment has defined sustainable development as:

“ a strategy for improving the quality of life while preserving the environmental potential for the future, of living off the interest rather than consuming natural capital. Sustainable development mandates that the present generation must not narrow the choices of future generations but must strive to expand them by passing on an environment and an accumulation of resources that will allow its children to live at least as well as, and preferably better than, people today. Sustainable development is premised on living within the Earth's means (Beatley and Manning 1997:4).

The general meaning of sustainability can be found by reference to any dictionary, where *sustainable* is defined as “ capable of being up-held; maintainable”, and to *sustain* is defined as “ to keep in existence; to maintain

or prolong" (Zovanyi, 1998: 148). The distinguishing characteristic of sustainability seems to be the "ability to be continued" (Zovanyi, 1998: 148).

The term 'sustainable development' has been criticised as too open a concept with many possible meanings, interpretations and assumptions associated with it, some of which are contradictory. The confusion surrounding the term seems to revolve around some misconceptions, such as

"using the terms sustainable development, sustainable growth, and sustainable use interchangeably, as if their meanings were the same. They are not. Sustainable growth is a contradiction in terms: nothing physical can grow indefinitely. Sustainable use is applicable only to renewable resources: it means using them at rates within their capacity for renewal" (Roseland 1998: 3).

Some also use the term to implicate environmental protection, while sustaining economic development, but the notion of environmental protection involves the separation of humanity from nature (Roseland 1998).

Sustainability unites these interests, and implies more than environmental protection or sustaining economic development. Its agenda involves qualitative economic and social change "to improve human well being while reducing the need for environmental protection" (Roseland 1998: 4).

The environmental movement has shown a resurgence of sorts in the 1990s, with the notion of sustainability being at the forefront of the latest movement. David W.Orr (1992) sees a new postmodern form of the movement, that

works toward a world that "protects individual rights while protecting the larger interests of the planet and our children who live on it" (Orr 1992: ix). The crisis of sustainability seems to be a primary concern of postmodern thinking. This has been manifested in the British Columbia context through the development of the regional growth strategies legislation, which could be represented as legislation for planning practice that attempts to at least begin to consider this postmodern thinking.

2.2.1 TECHNOLOGICAL SUSTAINABILITY VERSUS ECOLOGICAL SUSTAINABILITY

David W. Orr (1992) focuses on clarifying sustainability by examining two contrasting approaches and meanings: technological sustainability and ecological sustainability. These approaches have similar goals, but the primary differences between the two have to do with "assumptions about future growth, the scale of economic activity, the balance between top-down and grass-roots activism, the kinds of technology, and the relationship between communities and larger political and economic structures" (Orr 1992: 1).

In general terms, Orr considers that the Bruntland Commission's conclusions on sustainable development hedge between the two versions of sustainability he recognizes - technological and ecological. He identifies 'technological' sustainability with the belief that we can cure all problems with a technological answer or money fix. This definition presumes that there is

really no need to make any drastic change in the way we currently operate and make decisions in the current global system, because human-kind holds the answers and the means to respond to any problems that will possibly arise.

Ecological sustainability, by contrast, entails the belief that the current 'status-quo' approach is unsustainable and, in order to approach sustainability, a new way of thinking must take place. The current social and economic system would have to be restructured in order for this approach to take root (Beatley and Manning 1997). Many definitions of sustainability have not included explicit ecological components, but there have been attempts to develop a working definition of ecological sustainability:

"Ecological sustainability refers to... development activity that acknowledges biophysical limits and the need to maintain essential ecological processes and life-support systems upon which all life depends. The ecological definition of sustainability focuses on natural biological processes and the continued productivity and functionality of ecosystems. Long-term ecological sustainability requires the protection of genetic resources and the conservation of biological diversity" (Zovanyi 1998: 157).

Sustainability seems to find its roots in biology and ecology, and specifically in the concept of ecological or natural 'carrying capacity' (Beatley and Manning 1997). This concept is based on the notion that there are certain physical and ecological limits in nature and if these limits are exceeded, they will have a ripple effect and possibly cause species collapse. Sustainable development stresses the importance of living within the natural carrying

capacities of any given area to support a society that can maintain quality of life over generations. Misty MacDuffee would agree with humans living within the carrying capacities of a given area:

“Meaningful concepts of ‘sustainability’ begin with the understanding that the planet has finite ecological and physical capacities that humans must live within. A sustainable human settlement therefore, is one that does not place greater demands on an ecosystem than what the ecosystem can sustain through its natural regenerative processes (MacDuffee 1996: 14).

There are certain operational measures that may be associated with Zovanyi’s working definition of ecological sustainability. First, it is key to preserve the diversity of life, and any actions that serve to reduce biodiversity are, by definition, ecologically unsustainable (Zovanyi 1998: 159).

Maintaining the integrity of ecosystems is the second necessary condition for ecological sustainability. In this case anything that serves to diminish ecological life-support services provided by ecosystems is ecologically unsustainable. The third and most important operational measure of ecological sustainability is to stop, or at least scale down, further human population growth to a level that can be supported indefinitely without eroding biodiversity or the integrity of ecosystems (Zovanyi 1998).

In contrast to merely technological sustainability, the ecological approach to sustainable development seems to involve fairly drastic behaviour change for many people. Many interests have done everything in their power to oppose any movement toward this approach because they do not want to

substantially restructure the way they now live. An ecological approach would restructure priorities, but it does not call for a complete replacement of the existing structure. It goes deeper into existing environmental problems and deals with the heart of these problems. It is not a “quick fix” solution to problems but rather a long-term design that offers lasting benefits to communities and their quality of life.

2.2.2 SUSTAINABLE PLACES

It is difficult to translate all of the broad concepts expressed around sustainable development into local and regional planning and development policy. However there have been efforts in cities and regions such as Seattle, Austin, Hamilton-Wentworth and Chattanooga that demonstrate the organization of their planning efforts around sustainability (Beatley and Manning 1997). These cities and regions are working towards the creation and development of what Beatley terms “sustainable places”:

“where people are working together to create healthy communities, where natural and historic resources are preserved, jobs are available, sprawl is contained, neighbourhoods are secure, education is lifelong, transportation and health care are accessible, and all citizens have opportunities to improve the quality of their lives” (Beatley and Manning 1997:18).

There are many distinguishing characteristics of sustainable places, but Beatley and Manning (1997) offer nine characteristics that could possibly define ‘a sustainable place’. They include:

1. Sustainable places seek to limit the environmental impacts and the consumption of natural resources.

2. Sustainable places are restorative and regenerative, where strong efforts are made to reverse the degradation already done to a place.
3. Sustainable places strive for a high quality of life that incorporates a strong social component, concerned with social and human sustainability, and which create and support livable places that offer a high quality of life.
4. 'Place' matters in sustainable places. Places have to be inspirational, uplifting, and memorable to engender a special feeling of attachment and belonging.
5. Sustainable places are integrative and holistic seeking ways of combining policies, programs, and design solutions to bring about multiple objectives that will benefit that place.
6. Sustainable places implies a new ethics posture that respects living on the planet and implies a moral obligation to consider future generations' interests and quality of life.
7. Sustainable places strive to be equitable and just. This implies that a place strives to be open to all racial, cultural, age, and income groups and encourages social and cultural diversity.
8. Sustainable places stress the importance of community and rising above narrow individualism.
9. Sustainable places reflect and promote full-cost accounting of the social and environmental costs of public and private decisions.

(Beatley and Manning 1997:27-39)

These elements represent a range of qualities that may manifest in a sustainable place. All of these characteristics of a sustainable place should be addressed when a community or region wants to achieve a better planning model for managing development in the future. These characteristics of a sustainable place also represent an improvement over the way we presently manage development in our communities. They represent a model of sorts for a community to translate more ecologically-sensitive concepts of sustainability into a vision and strategy for developing a sustainable place, be it a single community or a community of communities

on a regional scale. These characteristics may foster livable human environments that relate to Misty MacDuffee's concept of sustainable communities which:

“cultivate integrity, diversity and trust and are characterized by economic self-sufficiency, simplicity, a high quality of life, and harmony with the natural world. They demonstrate the prime importance of community, local empowerment and the potential of asserting human values in a spirit of co-operation with each other and the Earth” (MacDuffee 1996: 17).

A new ethic involving sustainable development (Table 1) would have to respect the interests of future generations, show greater respect for the needs of the broader public, engender personal responsibility to a particular community, respect and protect the natural environment, and promote thinking of one's-self as merely a part of a very fragile eco-system.

Table 1
A New Ethic for Sustainable Places

Current Ethic	Ethic of Sustainable Place
Individualism, selfishness	Interdependence, community
Shortsightedness, present-oriented ethic	Farsightedness, future-oriented ethic
Greed, commodity-based	Altruism
Parochialism, atomistic	Regionalism, extra-local
Material, consumption-based	Nonmaterial, community-based
Arrogance	Humility, caution
Anthropocentrism	Kinship

(Beatley and Manning 1997:195)

The only possibly way of achieving this alternative vision and new ethic (Table 1) is through education, promoting opportunities for public commitment to a particular land base, and legislating a different path with

policies that envision and promote change towards a sustainable future (Orr 1992). To achieve this, it is necessary to have strong partnerships that can build effective policies for a region.

Sustainable development requires a collective shift of individual actions and, more importantly, political choices (Jacobs 1994). Local government “provides one of the best ways to demonstrate the necessity, the desirability, and the practicality of moving toward sustainable communities” (Roseland 1998: 185). The reason for this is the fact that local governments are directly accountable political bodies that are responsible for decision-making on development applications. This makes them critical players in the advancement of sustainable development. The fact is that we can only develop community sustainability if we plan for it (Roseland 1998). This underlines the significance of active interventionist planning practice in rural communities.

Sustainability, especially ecological sustainability, calls for reform of existing societal practices. In planning there is a need for programs and practices that consciously take a sustainable approach to decision-making. In British Columbia, the Regional Growth Strategies legislation has provided a new framework that implicitly promotes sustainable development. However, it has left it up to the discretion of each regional district as to the extent that they

actually program for sustainable development, as in addressing the 'whether' and/or 'how' of future growth.

2.2.3 QUANTITATIVE GROWTH VERSUS QUALITATIVE DEVELOPMENT

Professional planning practice has to realize that development does not just mean population growth and increased economic output, but rather that development (rather than growth) implies qualitative improvement. Planners must recognize that sustainable development is a different kind of development that implies pro-active strategizing to develop (or 'grow') sustainability (Roseland 1998).

Timothy Beatley and Kristy Manning (1997) highlight two basic ways in which our communities can 'grow' in the future. The first path that may be followed continues to accommodate current patterns of development. It is based on wasteful consumption of land and auto dependency, which facilitate the loss of the natural landscapes that virtually sustain life on the planet. They argue that this approach will eventually force a weakening in the bonds of community and in the quality of our living conditions. This form of growth has been termed "quantitative expansion" by Herman Daly (1996).

The alternative to the maintenance of the status-quo would be a change toward what Daly (1996), an ecological economist, terms 'qualitative improvement' (or development without growth) as the path of future progress

- with roots in notions of ecological sustainability, or sustainable livelihoods.

Beatley and Manning (1997) offer an outline of a 'sustainable place' that envisions growth in terms of qualitative improvements:

" This future is one in which land is consumed sparingly, landscapes are cherished, and cities and towns are compact and vibrant and green. They are places that have much to offer in the way of social, cultural, and recreational activity, where the young and old are not marginalized, and where there is a feeling of community, an active civic life, and a concern for social justice. In these communities, the automobile has been tamed, many transportation options exist (including public transit and walking), and fundamental human mobility and freedom are enhanced. These are communities in which the economic base is viable as well as environmentally and socially restorative. This vision of place emphasizes both the ecological and the social, where quantity of consumption is replaced with quality of relationships" (Beatley and Manning 1997: 1-2).

It may be difficult for a region to strategise only on the concept of promoting qualitative improvement because quantitative expansion, or conventional growth pressures, will most likely continue. However, steps can be taken to ensure compliance towards qualitative improvement through local community plans that work towards a regional growth strategy vision that is based on qualitative improvement instead of quantitative expansion.

2.3 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT PLANNING AND GROWTH MANAGEMENT STRATEGISING

Beatley and Manning (1997) explain that planning has evolved in the last several decades with a primary emphasis on growth management. This era has sometimes been referred to as the 'quiet revolution in land use control', where communities have begun to examine the causes and impacts of

community growth. Growth management has helped to give birth to strong management tools and techniques in many areas to control and manage quantitative expansion and to enhance qualitative improvement patterns. Despite all of this increased planning activity, the accomplishments of various communities engaged in growth management in North America have been modest at best (Zovanyi 1998), especially if ecologically sustainable development is the benchmark.

There seems to be a lack of understanding about the real impacts of growth on communities (Fodor 1999). Generally, there seems to be a common misunderstanding about growth as quantitative expansion because it has often been referred to as a benefit to a community or place, but there has been less sense of the positives accompanying development, as in 'qualitative improvement' (Zovanyi 1998).

The fact is that growth as quantitative expansion creates negative impacts on the social and environmental well-being of communities (Zovanyi 1998, Fodor 1999). Many irreversible commitments of an area's resources (economic, social, and environmental) accompany such quantitative growth. This scenario may be unsustainable because the consequences and the problems will eventually become impossible to manage.

Growth management strategies use policies and regulations to guide growth as quantitative expansion and promote development as qualitative improvement. Most of the literature on growth management focuses on how to accommodate urban growth with fewer adverse impacts (Fodor 1999). This thinking seems to reflect a technological sustainability approach at best. The management skills of a planning department or a particular government agency are basically expected to provide the quick fix necessary to any problems associated with on-going growth in an area.

By contrast, the operational measures of a sustainability growth agenda are directly tied to the principles of ecological sustainability:

" much of the current preoccupation with the concept of sustainability ignores the reality that sustainability is at bottom *an ecological concept*. Without ecological sustainability no other forms of sustainability will be possible. As the underlying basis of all other forms of sustainability, the biosphere conditions the possibilities for development. This reality infers the obligation to preserve an ecological base for future development (Zovanyi 1998: 161).

Generally, the environmental planning efforts under growth management programs have not embraced the concept of ecologically sustainable development (Zovanyi 1998). The growth management movement has reflected a pro-growth (quantitative expansion) commitment or priority and has failed to include, or adequately reference, the three main operational measures of ecological sustainability (Zovanyi 1998), namely:

1. No further loss of biodiversity due to anthropogenic causes.

2. No further loss of ecosystems or impairment of their continued productivity and functioning due to anthropogenic causes.
3. An ongoing reduction in the scale of the human enterprise to a level capable of being supported indefinitely without eroding biodiversity or the integrity of ecosystems. (Zovanyi 1998: 159-160).

Growth management strategies have, arguably, included little effort to moderate a pro-growth stance or to explicitly adopt any form of ecologically sustainability as the primary guiding principle. Growth management has, at best, endorsed 'dynamically balanced growth' where the strategies aim to confer equal legitimacy on the objectives of growth as quantitative expansion and environmental protection. Yet these only serve the pursuit of an unsustainable end in ecological terms (Zovanyi 1998).

Growth management has staked a clear position on growth. It has not accepted the idea of stopping or slowing down growth nor acknowledged an emphasis on development as qualitative improvement. It seems that growth strategising has not accepted the view of growth, as quantitative expansion, as the central problem of the era. Instead, in North America there has been a tendency to subscribe to the view that we can have quantity with quality, if future growth is properly planned and regulated (Zovanyi 1998). However, the ecological sustainability position is presenting some serious challenges to the current growth management perspective and future vision.

Growth management and sustainable development are, by the definitions introduced in this study, contradictory unless the 'growth' being managed and cultivated is reframed as 'qualitative improvement'; or as in the 'growth' of sustainability positioning from a technological to an ecological perspective. Continued quantitative expansion (growth) without qualitative improvement (development) may by its very nature continually erode the economic, social and environmental conditions of communities. Such a scenario definitely does not meet the basic sustainability criteria adopted by Herman Daly (1991), where a community:

“ uses renewable natural resources no faster than they can replenish; it will use non-renewable resources like petroleum no faster than we can develop renewable substitutes like solar energy; and it will discharge wastes into the environment no faster than nature can absorb them” (Fodor 1999: 143 -144).

The main obstacles that stand in the way of achieving a vision of sustainability is uncertainty as to whether society will embrace the needed change, and confusion over what it will require to motivate taking the necessary transformatory steps to advance this alternate vision. There are a number of ways that land use and growth patterns can be manipulated, to minimize the degradation of the natural land base and to preserve the delicate social balance of communities. This fact has to be realized with a societal shift in the ethical underpinnings of action towards an ethic that is more supportive of (ecologically) sustainable development and of (ecologically) sustainable land use patterns and practices (Beatley and Manning 1997) (see Table 1).

The agenda for sustainable development, especially if defined as 'development without growth' (i.e. qualitative improvement without quantitative increase in throughput), is necessarily more ambitious than a growth (as quantitative expansion) management strategy because the growth (management) movement may be described in general terms as fundamentally growth-accommodating (quantitative expansion) (Zovanyi 1998). A genuine sustainable development (qualitative improvement) vision would have an agenda that includes enhanced efforts by the local and regional levels of government to 'develop' social equity, economic opportunity and environmental responsibility without continued quantitative expansion of the built environment. Local government is more in tune with its jurisdiction. It can reasonably view the area in its entirety, creating strategies that incorporate sustainable development operational measures to address the particular circumstances of their area:

"the paradigm of sustainability views the community in its entirety: its environmental impacts and how they can be minimized; how well its citizens are living and how programs and policies can be coordinated and implemented to enhance quality of life; its resource needs and how they are being met; and the environmental and social impacts of meeting those needs (Beatley and Manning 1997: 19).

The "growth-obsessed era" would not be totally forgotten if a new sustainable development vision became the focus of managing down growth and raising up development. Both traditional land use planning and more recent growth management concerns would probably remain a primary focus. However, a sustainable development vision would certainly reach further and consider all spheres to make it a more complete initiative in combating the serious

environmental and social problems that past and present growth situations have created.

A sustainable development vision for the future would set an agenda for energetic efforts to reverse the degradation already present, and use these efforts to teach future generations through a social learning mode. Albert Bandura (1977), a leading social-learning theorist, points out that "in daily life people notice which actions succeed and which fail or produce no result - and adjust their behaviour accordingly" (in Craig, Kermis and Digdon 1998:47). This vision would advocate, for example, the adoption of policies that work towards achieving the nine characteristics of a sustainable place.

2.3.1 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND REGIONALGROWTH STRATEGISING IN BC

The province of BC has not formally defined sustainable development, nor used the term in the GSA legislation because of a concern that the term is too general (Hawksworth, 2000). Sustainability is a critical element in land development planning on a world scale. It could be argued that now is the time to feature it in the programming of regional growth management strategies.

The regional growth strategies legislation in the *Local Government Act* of British Columbia has apparently attempted to promote essentially 'qualitative

improvement' through the 14 provincial goals in the Growth Strategies Act.

When drafting the GSA, instead of defining and using the term 'sustainability'

the Province of BC substituted the following purpose statement:

"The purpose of a regional growth strategy is to promote human settlement that is socially, economically and environmentally healthy and that makes efficient use of public facilities and services, land and other resources" (*Local Government Act*, Part 25: Section 849 (1)).

The provincial goals relate to the current thinking in planning for sustainable development. The goals specified in the legislation are:

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

- good stewardship of land, sites and structures with cultural heritage value.

(Local Government Act, Part 25: section 849 (2))

Many of these goals imply sustainable development, but they are not mandatory elements of a growth strategy in BC. The provincial government introduced these goals to help local governments recognize relevant regional issues along these lines. There is no legislative elaboration as to how a region can actually program elements into a growth strategy that will effectively work toward achieving these goals. It seems that a regional growth strategy, developed under a sustainable development framework, may have a very good chance of meeting many of the goals laid out in the regional growth strategies legislation, even if only because sustainability implies 'the capability of being up-held' (Zovanyi 1998:148). Many of the goals outlined in the GSA legislation refer to the efficient use of natural resources, reduction of automobile use, preventing pollution, preserving cultural heritage and open space, and the protection of natural areas. These goals could possibly be accommodated under a framework that imposes a strategy for qualitative improvement notions of sustainable development, where change only happens if it actually benefits the location, and if the use can be continued for future generations. However, the provincial government in BC has left it up to each regional district in the province to determine how they want to strategise toward meeting these goals. The province has not issued a pre-conceived formula that strictly requires regional districts to

include environmental, economic, social, and servicing elements as matters that that need to be addressed, to make a strategy fit a sustainable development framework. They have purposely done this in recognition that different regions face different issues and opportunities.

2.4 CAN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND GROWTH MANAGEMENT BE RECONCILED IN PRACTICE?

The process of cultural and political change seems to be a very large hurdle to overcome and little has been done to reconcile growth management and sustainable development. Resistance to a reconciliation agenda can come in many forms. It can occur with a local political representative who opposes change because he/she sees it as a threat to their style of public administration; or it can occur in higher government agencies that lack trust in regional and municipal governments. It can also occur in communities where the residents mistrust local government because of the way they have handled different situations. One of the biggest challenges to reconciling growth management and sustainable development is altering political and public perceptions, with respect to the way a community grows and evolves.

“Creating sustainable places is very much a process of thinking about and visualizing the future. It is as much a process as an outcome. It is about soliciting the input and participation, ideally, of all individuals and groups in the community. It is about carrying on a sustained dialogue about how the community wants to grow and evolve, what it wants to look like in the future, what will likely be the results if no changes in practice and policy are made, how it will address its moral obligations (for example, to future residents and generations) and so on (Beatley and Manning 1997:205).

In theory, sustainable development and growth management could be reconciled in practice if growth management strategies adopt ecological sustainability as the guiding principle for the management effort. It may also be accomplished if regional districts strategise on creating policy to promote development of, rather than growth in, a community or region (with growth being defined as quantitative expansion and development being defined as qualitative improvement).

Eben Fodor (1999) elaborates on this statement by offering a straightforward practical approach to move an area toward greater sustainability. All of these practical steps could be accomplished in a relatively short time period, are possible within our current legal framework and do not require overhauling the political and economic system (Fodor 1999). These steps have been included in growth management strategising and make sense for all communities seeking to achieve greater sustainability, to simply lead to better communities. Fodor's 12 practical steps, taken together, could possibly form a framework, or an integrated strategy, that may produce long-term benefits for an area:

- **Build a positive vision.** A positive, shared, long-term vision for the future can provide the inspiration, motivation and direction to propel a community forward and encourage the various interest groups to work together with a common purpose.
- **Improve citizen involvement.** Broad, open citizen involvement in public planning and policy-making respects and enhances our democratic process. Increased citizen involvement generates many benefits, including policies that better serve the broader public interest. Citizen involvement doesn't just happen. Local governments

must actively engage citizens and create productive processes for meaningful involvement.

- **Provide economic opportunity.** The basic economic needs of the entire community must be met without compromising the quality of the natural environment. Local economic development must be focused on the long-term welfare of existing residents. Economic gains can no longer come at the expense of the environment.
- **Use land wisely.** Land is a finite resource with no substitute. Consequently, we should use land efficiently and intelligently and strive to keep the urban footprint as small as possible to minimize environmental impact.
- **Provide better information.** Good decisions require good information, including natural resource inventories and status reports, growth forecasts, alternative scenarios, policy analysis, development impact analysis, etc. Disseminate information widely and make it readily accessible to everyone. Good government starts with an informed public – it's the cornerstone of democracy.
- **Use indicators and benchmarks for progress.** Indicators are a tool for improving public policy and monitoring the status of a community and its environment. Benchmarks are goals that can be measured with indicators to help ensure that public policies lead to progress and long-term sustainability.
- **Use full-cost accounting.** Acknowledge the full environmental, social, and economic costs of growth and development. Evaluate these costs in making policy decisions. Eliminate subsidies that distort markets and cause overdevelopment. Enact pay-as-you-grow policies.
- **Think long-range.** Consider the impact decisions will have far into the future. Extend long-range community planning horizons to 50 or 100 years (instead of ten or 20 years). Utilize computer modeling capabilities to evaluate long-range consequences of the current trends and compare alternatives.
- **Encourage efficient resource use.** Set efficiency goals for energy, water, and other resource uses for all sectors: residential, commercial, industrial, and transportation. Use incentives and regulations to minimize resource consumption and waste production and maximize re-use and recycling by businesses and households.
- **Make neighbourhoods walkable.** Safe, friendly, walkable neighbourhoods designed to eliminate automobile dependence will be one of the most visible attributes of the sustainable community. Create automobile-free zones and automobile-independent housing complexes where walkers and bicyclists enjoy the privilege of maximum access and convenience.

- **Preserve unique features.** Preserve features of local and regional significance: valuable farmland, forests and open space, and unique natural, scenic, recreational, historic, or cultural resources. Treat these natural assets as priceless family heirlooms to be passed on to future generations.
- **Recognize physical limits to growth and consumption.** Population size, resource consumption, land use, and pollution levels must be in balance with the complex environmental support system. Start by acknowledging that physical and practical limits do exist. Then, try to identify what these limits are in terms of desirable, optimal, or ideal conditions.

(Fodor 1999: 147-153)

These practical steps could possibly be integrated into a framework that reconciles growth management strategising with sustainable development. This would allow an area not to be overrun with growth (as quantitative expansion) and have the potential to provide better government, good jobs, adequate housing, ample open space and parkland, and preserve quality neighbourhoods and safe, pedestrian-friendly streets.

There are more than 1300 local governments in 33 countries that are engaged in locally-tailored Agenda 21 planning, which is a global action plan for sustainable development (MacDuffee 1996). The United Nations Earth Summit in 1992 created Agenda 21 and it has been a motivating element in the further development of many rural and urban sustainability initiatives. Cities such as Seattle, Chattanooga, and Austin in the United States and Hamilton-Wentworth in Canada have developed sustainable community plans.

The concept of sustainable human settlement has been discussed at two global conferences. In 1976, the world's first global conference (United Nations Conference on Human Settlements) was held in Vancouver and was referred to as the first Habitat conference (MacDuffee 1996). The Secretary General referred to this conference as "a turning point in improving human settlements in the world" (MacDuffee 1996: 12). The second United Nations Conference on Sustainable Human Settlements was held in Istanbul in June of 1996. This conference is known as Habitat II. The issues facing the 12,000 planners, government officials and activists attending Habitat II was a sobering testimony to the failures of the last 20 years, since the first conference (MacDuffee 1996). The main finding that everyone could agree on at this conference was that the "barriers to solutions are institutional and political – not financial – and stem from deeply held assumptions and ideologies" (MacDuffee 1996: 12). Another common theme of this conference was that "human beings are at the centre of concerns for sustainable development, they are the basis for action in implementing sustainable human settlements" (Lidstone 1996: 1).

Misty MacDuffee (1996) has developed some community-based components for sustainability that relate to the recommendations of the Habitat II

Conference on human settlements including:

- **Ecosystem-based planning.** Premised on the goal that all economic, land use and technological development and planning be subject to the underlying imperative of maintaining long-term ecosystem integrity.

- **Revising environmental impact assessment.** Environmental impact assessment is a decision-making tool that is intended to integrate environmental considerations into projects. To achieve sustainability, the onus for development projects should be on the proponent to show that the project is necessary, will further stress ecological systems, public service and social structures as minimally as possible, and will contribute to a more liveable city.
- **Revising Official Community Plans.** Official Community Plans are not comprehensive enough to address the emerging focus on sustainable cities. Community plans should be revised to include:
 - A full description of natural systems and processes in the area;
 - A full description of the flow of energy and materials through the urban system;
 - Explicit policy statements on preserving the "natural capital" of a region
 - A clear policy to create settlement patterns and neighbourhoods that maintain the character of the natural environment and enhance community;
 - Growth management strategies that acknowledge finite resources and identify an upper limit for the number of buildings and the output of non-renewable waste;
 - A variety of instruments to encourage land owners to exercise stewardship;
 - Transportation strategies that consume the least resources and have the least impact on communities and the environment; and
 - A general commitment to develop community through integration, self-reliance, and respect for the living world that sustains us.
- **Indicators.** Indicators are measures of conditions and trends, that are accepted by the community as valid criteria for evaluating change. Indicators must be accurate, relevant and valid to local stakeholders. Economic growth indicators are not valid measures for society's overall well being, much less its sustainability. A more valid indicator, from the perspective of the living world, is whether an economy provides its members with the essentials for a healthy, secure, productive and fulfilling life while using no more than each person's rightful share of the ecosystem's regenerative capacity.
- **Review process.** Progress toward sustainability must also be evaluated periodically (two to five years) by a comprehensive audit.

Indicators by themselves may be too technical or simplistic to evaluate a community's actual progress; a deeper analysis of conditions and trends is necessary. In addition to furthering public awareness, the results of a progress review can ultimately be used to determine whether revisions need to be made to the goals, strategies, and targets in community visions and planning.

- **Internal audits.** An internal audit is often useful, and even necessary, for municipalities to review how their existing procedures and practices would support or hinder the implementation of new sustainability policies. A review can also provide a framework for introducing new policies to municipal departments and agencies.
- **Feedback programs.** A community feedback system is designed to provide information, rewards, and disincentives to help regulate community behavior without external control. It provides channels for people to communicate their responses to other parties.
- **Breaking away from conventional thought.** Economic imperatives must be reconstructed to serve the needs of people and the natural world. (Misty MacDuffee 1996: 26-31)

These components bring together perspectives on improving long-term planning toward sustainable development. Growth strategising could incorporate some of these components to ensure that they are promoting sustainable development and contain the necessary assessment tools to report progress towards a better future. These components have been used in many communities around the world to advance sustainable development including those regions and cities mentioned in 2.2.2 and Stockholm in Sweden, Queensland in Australia, Lancashire in England, and Groningen in the Netherlands (MacDuffee 1996).

The Regional Growth Strategies legislation in British Columbia is rather progressive and could be considered to constitute a more aggressive

precedent for large-scale growth management. However, the question remains whether the legislation can significantly advance long-term planning for sustainable development in British Columbia?

Donald Lidstone (1996) identifies how the GSA legislation reflects the principles affirmed at the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements in Istanbul.

- The GSA has promoted active partnerships between local governments with support of the provincial government.
- The GSA strengthens direct cooperation among local governments with the support of the province.
- The GSA has had success in recognizing the role of the local government in the sustainable development movement.
- The GSA allocates resources to local governments with respect to human settlement development.
- The GSA created a legal framework for the exercise of local democracy; and it has granted local autonomy to manage human settlements (Lidstone 1996:4).

However, using the lessons learned from the Habitat II conference, Lidstone (1996) discusses ways in which the legislation could be improved. He believes the GSA legislation could be improved by:

- Legislating that all regional growth strategies, official plans and bylaws satisfy the tests of human settlement sustainability.
- Requiring regional districts to incorporate a sustainable development strategy.
- Non-governmental organizations, as well as neighbourhood and other interest groups should be involved in the advisory groups to encourage more public input and participation in the strategy; and

- Environmental assessments should be integrated into the required monitoring of a growth strategy to allow a region to actually monitor progress. (Lidstone 1996:5).

Overall, Lidstone has offered a number of different ways to improve the existing GSA legislation. He believes in having a mandated effort toward redeveloping British Columbia's communities, with sustainability in the forefront. His advocating could lead to a situation where growth management and sustainable development would be reconciled in practice in BC. It would legislate ecologically sustainable operational measures into the development of strategies, plans and bylaws. He indicates how sustainability could be implemented in BC:

1. The province could, working with the affected local governments develop province-wide standards for sustainable development.
2. Every community in British Columbia, and the Province itself, should proceed with an "Agenda 21" program.
3. Establish settlement boundaries for communities of interest with the consecration of green space in areas between the boundaries.
4. A provincial auditor should be appointed to audit every program of the Province, its agencies, Crown corporations and local government in the context of the province-wide sustainability standards and inter-governmental co-ordination.

(Lidstone 1996: 7)

The practical divergences between local planning practices and regional strategies in BC could possibly be insurmountable and could result in the failure of some aspects of a growth strategy. This would be especially true in large rural regional districts because there can be a wide diversity of goals

and priority items. However, Lidstone's theorizing is fairly conservative and could be legislated in the Province of British Columbia.

John Meligrana (2000) also suggests that there are many areas in the BC Regional Growth Strategies legislation that could be improved but his critiques do not include reference to introducing the concept of ecological sustainability.

2.5 SUMMARY

This chapter has suggested that growth management and sustainable development can be reconciled in practice if regional growth strategies adopt sustainability as their guiding principle for the management effort and strategise on creating policy to promote qualitative improvement.

There are several characteristics that would promote, and could potentially form, the basis for sustainable communities:

- A long-range outlook for planning and development;
 - Social equity;
 - Stewardship of the natural environment and living within its regenerative capacity;
 - Economic, human, and biological diversity;
 - Community self-reliance;
 - Recognition of social, environmental and economic interdependence.
- (Beatley and Manning 1997 and Roseland 1998)

To fully reconcile growth management and sustainable development will require many changes in established practices, attitudes and understanding, including:

- Responsive and proactive governance that encourages, reflects and promotes ideals of informed participation, compassion and fairness.
- The use and development of technology that reinforces the long-term planning for sustainable development.
- Long-range policy analysis.
- Social mobilization and social reform.
- Preserving and valuing culture, heritage, and quality of life in communities.
- Planning and development that is participatory, long-range, comprehensive, and integrated with sustainability goals.
- Education that supports and promotes sustainable development and develops skills in managing the transition to sustainability through social learning.

(Beatley and Manning 1997 and Roseland 1998)

In BC the real challenge seems to be able to generate growth strategies that move away from the dysfunctional planning systems of the past and help to improve communities well into the future. The term 'sustainable development' does not have an obvious meaning and requires definition and elaboration. It seems to be a necessary element in growth strategising to ensure that regional districts can adequately address the host of provincial goals defined in BC's Regional Growth Strategies legislation.

In BC, the Regional Growth Strategies legislation could be improved to ensure a stronger effort towards creating growth strategies that significantly advance long-term planning for sustainability in regional districts. Lidstone

(1996) has stated that the GSA “constitutes the best available precedent for growth management” (Lidstone 1996: 6), but has offered some improvements that require the legislation to contain matters dealing with sustainability. His position may presently be seen as being too idealistic by the provincial government. However, his ideas could be implemented under our current legislation and would almost certainly improve growth strategising and community planning practice in the province of BC.

The Regional District of Nanaimo in BC has developed a growth management plan that attempts to deal with the challenges of past development patterns in the region. The programming of the plan was done before the GSA was introduced in BC. It has been necessary to identify the relationship between growth management and sustainable development to be able to complete an evaluation of the degree to which the RDN plan has addressed the goals of the GSA legislation, and advanced long-term planning for sustainable development. We now turn to this evaluation.

CHAPTER 3

CASE STUDY: THE REGIONAL DISTRICT OF NANAIMO GROWTH MANAGEMENT INITIATIVE

3.0 INTRODUCTION

The Regional District of Nanaimo (RDN) completed a Growth Management Plan (GMP) in 1997. Most of the programming for this initiative was done before the province of BC passed the Growth Strategies Act (GSA). The programming of the RDN's GMP was very extensive, in part because of a primary focus on generating a regional land use plan (Connelly and Thomas, 2000). However, this focus did change to more of a general strategy when the RDN sought to bring the program into line with the new Regional Growth Strategies legislation (Hawksworth, 2000).

This chapter focuses on the programming of the RDN's GMP. It identifies and outlines the major issues involved in the programming of the GMP for the region. It provides information on the RDN context and the growth issues associated with the region. It also attempts to identify and examine whether the RDN GMP addresses sustainable development. There is also interest in determining if there is any scope for suggesting further growth strategising to further advance long-term planning for sustainable development in that region. It focuses on the extent to which the GMP addresses the 14 provincial goals for growth management. This chapter comprises an evaluation of the transferability of the RDN program experience to determine if the programming of the RDN

GMP could be usefully adapted and/or applied for other growth strategy programming in other BC regions experiencing high rates of growth. This evaluation builds on an effort to first determine if the programming of the Growth Management Plan has actually been directed to managing the improvement of the quality of the region's communities and natural environment.

3.1 THE REGIONAL DISTRICT OF NANAIMO

The Regional District of Nanaimo is located on the East Coast of Vancouver Island (see map p.77). It was one of the fastest growing regions in British Columbia between 1981 and 1997, when the population grew by almost 50 percent from 79,506 to 131, 302 residents (Regional District of Nanaimo, 1999). The rapid growth of the region "raised concerns about the long-term liveability of the region, effects on the environment, neighbourhood change, crime, traffic, water supply, and the cost of services" (Westland Resource Group [g] March 1995: i).

The population of the RDN increased by more than 630% from 1941 to 1994. The growth rates for the three member municipalities in the RDN have increased even more dramatically over that same period. There have been consistently high growth rates and an expanding population base in the RDN for approximately forty years. These changes are summarized in Table 2.

Regional District of Nanaimo

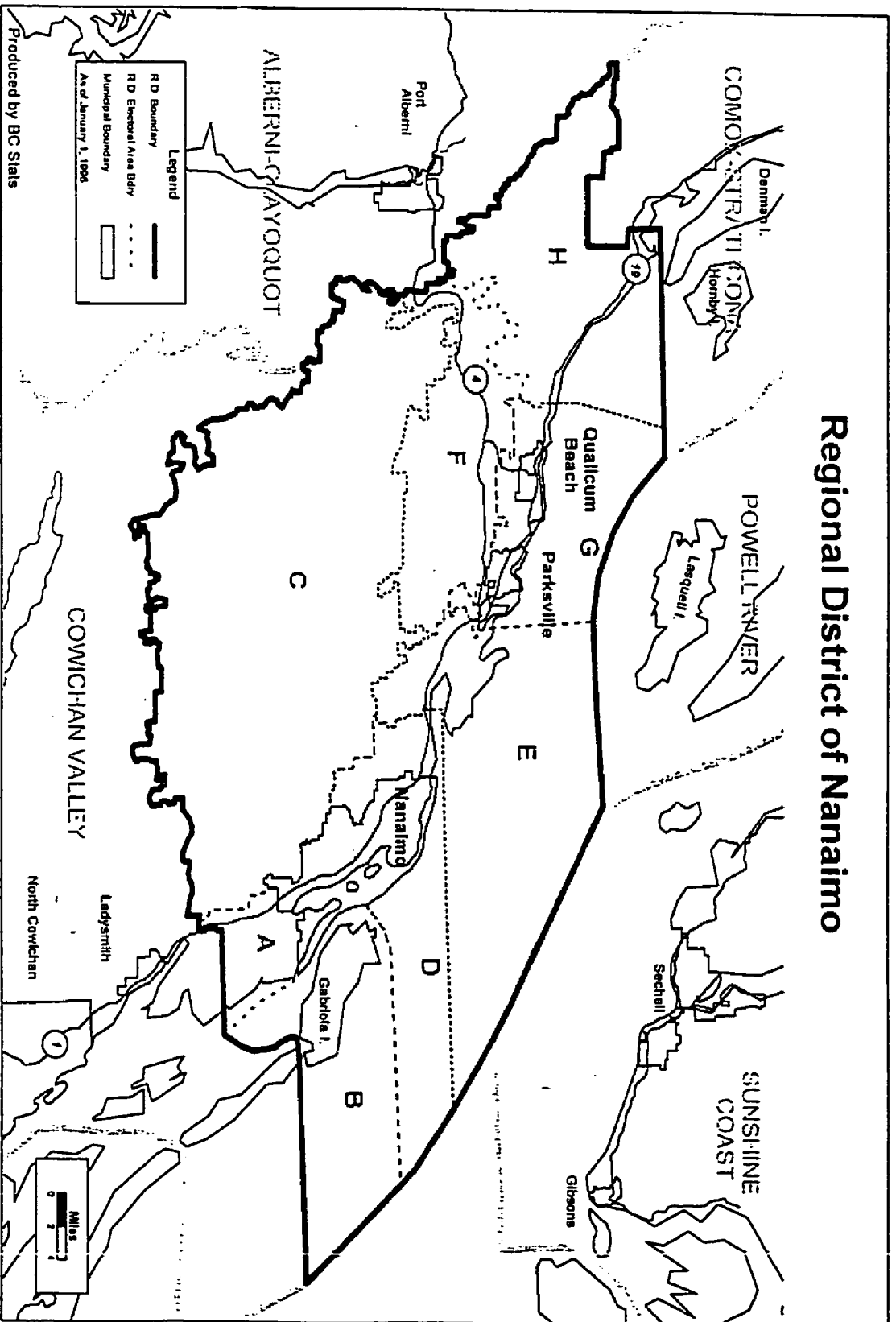


Table 2
RDN POPULATION GROWTH RATES: INCORPORATED AREAS

Area	Percentage Change in Population by Census Period (%)									Ave. Annual Chg.		
	1941-1951	1951-1956	1956-1961	1961-1966	1966-1971	1971-1976	1976-1981	1981-1986	1986-1991	1981-1991	1986-1991	1991-1994
RDN Total	48	19	15	19	22	29	25	7	24	3.2	4.8	5.9
City of Nanaimo	8	77	7	7	-2	170	17	4	23	2.8	4.6	5.4
Parksville	-	26	21	21	52	47	64	12	26	4	5.2	8.8
Qualicum Beach	-	-6	13	13	41	38	66	19	29	5.4	5.4	12.3

(Westland Resource Group [g] March 1995: 3).

The growth rates in the unincorporated areas of the RDN steadily increased in the eight-year period from 1986 to 1994. The population growth in these areas has varied significantly (Table 3). Some of the unincorporated areas have met or exceeded the average annual population increase in the RDN as a whole, over the same period of time.

Table 3
RDN POPULATION GROWTH RATE: UNINCORPORATED AREAS

Area	Total Change (%)			Average Annual Change (%)		
	1981-86	1986-91	1991-94	1981-86	1986-91	1991-94
RDN Total	7	24	18	3.2	4.8	5.9
A - Cedar	1	13	71	1.5	2.6	3.5
B - Gabriola Island	28	24	30	5.9	4.8	10.2
C - Nanaimo Lakes	3	19	13	2.3	3.8	4.4
D - Wellington	9	12	9	2.1	2.4	2.9
E - Nanoose	14	48	25	6.9	9.6	8.4
F - Errington	8	18	13	2.8	3.6	4.4
G - French Creek	9	43	18	5.6	8.6	5.8
H - Bowser	9	31	11	4.2	6.2	3.8

(Westland Resource Group [g] March 1995: 5)

Growth in the RDN has exceeded the growth rates of other regions that are considered high population growth areas such as the Capital Regional District (CRD), the Greater Vancouver Regional District, and British Columbia as a whole. This information is shown in Table 4.

Table 4
BC HISTORICAL GROWTH RATE COMPARISONS

CENSUS PERIOD	PERCENTAGE GROWTH RATES BY AREA			
	RDN	B.C.	CRD	GVRD
1941-1951	48%	42%	41%	43%
1951-1956	19	20	17	18
1956-1961	15	16	14	19
1961-1966	19	15	12	13
1966-1971	22	17	12	15
1971-1976	29	13	13	6
1976-1981	25	11	8	8
1981-1986	7	6	6	11
1986-1991	25	13	13	22
1941-1991	524%	301%	246%	292%

(Westland Resource Group [g] March 1995: 9)

Growth rates in the RDN have generally exceeded that of the ten provinces and of Canada as a whole (Westland Resource Group [g] March 1995: 8).

For example, from 1987 to 1992, the RDN's population growth rate was almost double that of the fastest growing province in Canada (ibid.).

The population in the RDN is projected to double from the 1991 census figure of 101, 700 to almost 200,000 people by 2021(Westland Resource Group [g] March 1995: 32). Under a low growth scenario the population in the RDN may exceed 150,000 and under a higher growth scenario it has the potential to reach 260,000 (ibid.). Therefore, by 2021, the RDN may have an additional 45,000 to 175, 000 new residents in the region. This is shown in Table 5.

Table 5
RDN POPULATION PROJECTIONS

YEAR	LOW		P.E.O.P.L.E. MODEL		HIGH	
	Rate	Population	Rate	Population	Rate	Population
2007	0.80	139,108	1.60	159,119	2.40	184,624
2008	0.85	140,290	1.70	161,824	2.55	189,332
2009	0.85	141,482	1.70	164,575	2.55	194,160
2010	0.85	142,685	1.70	167,373	2.55	199,111
2011	0.85	143,898	1.70	170,218	2.55	204,188
2012	0.85	145,121	1.70	173,112	2.55	209,395
2013	0.80	146,282	1.60	175,882	2.40	214,420
2014	0.80	147,452	1.60	178,696	2.40	219,566
2015	0.80	148,632	1.60	181,555	2.40	224,836
2016	0.80	149,821	1.60	184,460	2.40	230,232
2017	0.80	151,020	1.60	187,411	2.40	235,758
2018	0.80	152,228	1.60	190,410	2.40	241,416
2019	0.80	153,446	1.60	193,457	2.40	247,210
2020	0.80	154,674	1.60	196,552	2.40	253,143
2021	0.80	155,911	1.60	199,697	2.40	259,218

(Westland Resource Group [g] March 1995: 34).

The RDN residents' concern over maintaining their quality of life, alongside the excessive growth increases, became a political motivator to start to plan for a new way of development of the RDN. The programming and development of the RDN Growth Management Plan began in 1993 under the banner of the *Regional Challenge and Choice Program*. It was effectively completed in 1997.

There has been limited evaluation of this project to determine if the development of the Plan has challenged old ways of "doing development planning" and/or helped to create a new planning framework that can guide the region to a positioning as a more desirable, livable, and sustainable place.

3.2 PROGRAMMING GROWTH MANAGEMENT IN THE REGIONAL DISTRICT OF NANAIMO

The RDN began the programming of the GMP in 1993 under the *Regional Challenge and Choice* program when there was no provincial legislation pertaining to growth management. The RDN initiated the GMP effort because the region's population was then expected to increase by 57,000 persons in a ten year time-frame from 1986 to 1996, and to possibly reach 200,000 persons by the year 2021 (Regional District of Nanaimo, 1997). This high rate of growth and rapid physical development concerned area residents. The public's concern centered around personal safety, high growth rates, pollution, traffic congestion, rapid development, changing neighborhood character, loss of natural environment, urban sprawl and declining quality of life, exacerbated by lack of signs of the population

stabilizing in the near future (Connelly and Thomas, 2000). The *Regional Challenge and Choice* programming was designed to use technical information and broad public consultation to develop a growth management plan.

A significant aspect of the GMP was the Regional Board's recognition of the need for a regional approach to growth management and change before there were any legislated tools available for supporting such an approach in BC. This is significant because it conveys the broad support that existed for alternative measures to the "growth-accommodating" development decisions and regulations that were having a negative impact on the region.

The RDN designed the Growth Management Plan by collecting a large amount of data on growth management and regional issues relating to growth. The RDN Growth Management Plan also benefited from broad participation and input from the region's residents. The direction and programming of the GMP became clearer as more information was collected on the nature of growth in the region (Regional District of Nanaimo, 1997). The RDN programmed its GMP under three distinct categories, shown in Table 6. Under each of these categories are the programming techniques employed to collect the relevant data needed to complete a final Growth Management Plan for the region, and an outline of the implementation

procedures to ensure that the policies, objectives and goals contained in the plan are carried out.

Table 6
The Growth Management Planning Process

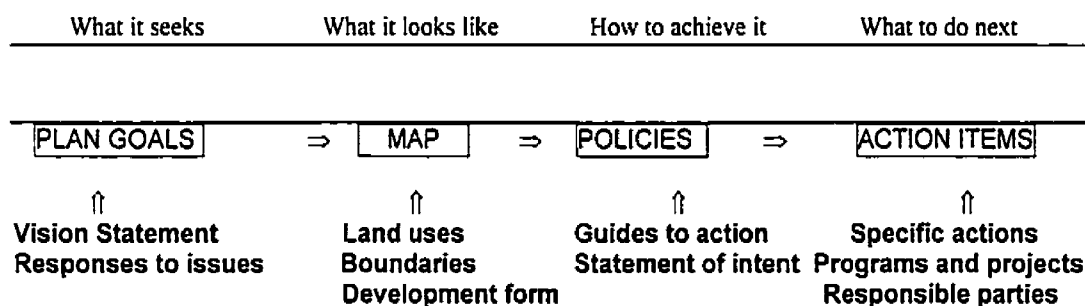
Design	Adoption	Implementation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data collection • Public surveys, meetings • Issue analysis • Visioning • Prepare Scenario Options • Public open houses • Goal and policy formulation • Draft Plan review by public, government • Plan revision 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public review • Local and senior government review • Public hearings • Municipal approval • Board approval • Ministry of Municipal Affairs recognition under the Growth Strategies Act 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional context statements • OCP amendments • Resident, business involvement • Conduct special studies • Implementation agreements and programs • Indicator formulation • Monitoring programs and Annual Reports • Changes to development process

(Regional District of Nanaimo, 1997: 10).

Once the RDN had established the planning process to initiate the growth management project, it proceeded to program the major elements of the GMP, shown in Table 7. The major elements contained the goals of the GMP and the regional vision, that identified a clear direction for achieving a desirable future in the RDN. They also included maps showing the designated areas around the region that were subject to the GMP and identified specific policies that would guide decision-making concerning development applications in the future. The major elements also set out

specific actions that would lead to the implementation of the GMP and outlined the responsible parties to carry out those actions.

Table 7
MAJOR ELEMENTS OF THE RDN GROWTH MANAGEMENT PLAN



(Regional District of Nanaimo, 1997: 11).

The programming of the RDN GMP involved a large amount of data collection and analysis. Different parties had roles and responsibilities in the development of the RDN GMP and they included:

Regional Board

- Providing direction regarding the administration of the GMP.
- Developing the GMP vision and goals.
- Developing a monitoring program for the GMP.
- Adopting the GMP.
- Relating the GMP to other Regional District business.

Community Advisory Group

- Formulating schedules for public meetings.
- Conducting focus group meetings.
- Conducting public workshops.

- Help design and analyse public surveys.
- Educate the region's residents on growth management.
- Identifying local and regional issues and priorities.

Technical Advisory Committee

- Overseeing preparation of key technical reports.
- Analysing technical reports.
- Relating technical data to the policy development of the GMP.

Intergovernmental Advisory Committee

- Advise the RDN and member municipalities on the development and implementation of the GMP.
- Facilitate co-ordination of provincial and regional government actions, policies and programs.
- Identifying and securing data on growth management issues.
- Developing conclusions and providing perspectives about progressing towards the GMP vision and goals.
- Communicating the results of the GMP province wide.

Performance Review Committee

- Providing assistance in the progress towards the achievement of the GMP vision and goals.
- Monitor the GMP performance and progress through annual reports.
- Provide perspectives that could be used to improve the GMP.
- Educate the regional residents on how the GMP is benefiting the region.

Regional District of Nanaimo Staff

- Research and analysis of public and technical data.
- Organizing and facilitating public consultation.
- Writing annual reports on the GMP.
- Administrative assistance to the Performance Review Committee and the Intergovernmental Advisory Committee.

- Communication co-ordination between the RDN Board and the Performance Review Committee, Intergovernmental Advisory Committee, and the general public.

Consulting Services

- Preparing technical reports.
- Collecting data for the development of the GMP.
- Designing new programs and databases to store and manage the GMP data.

The detailed programming of the GMP was set out on a bi-monthly timeline where certain objectives were set forth and completed (Appendix B). In the first year of the five-year schedule for the GMP, the RDN hired consultants to review growth management issues faced by the RDN, while the regional district staff put together a work program and budget for the overall project.

The programming of the *Regional Challenge and Choice* initiative was elaborate and involved Westland Resource Group consultants. The RDN did not want to engage in hiring extra staff for the development of a growth management plan, so they hired consultants to develop the programming framework (Connelly and Thomas, 2000).

In the second year (1994), the RDN received cost-share funding for the programming of the *Regional Challenge and Choice* initiative from the provincial government of BC. The overall cost of programming the RDN Growth Management Plan was roughly \$80,000 to \$100,000 a year, over five years, for a total sum of approximately \$500,000 dollars (Connelly and Thomas, 2000). The RDN paid \$250,000 and the provincial government paid

the balance. This worked out to roughly two dollars a person for residents located in the RDN Growth Management Plan Area (ibid).

A public consultation campaign was also developed and initiated in the second year of programming for the Regional Challenge and Choice initiative. The first action was to develop a newspaper advertisement revealing the proposed growth management strategy idea and requesting feedback from the general public in the region. The RDN Board also set up a Community Advisory Group to formulate and conduct focus group meetings, public surveys and workshops, with a view to educating region residents, and identifying local and regional issues and priorities. A Technical Advisory Committee was also established to oversee the preparation of key technical reports that were used, in addition to the public feedback, for the formulation of a Vision Statement, growth management policies and guidelines, and the development of Scenario Options of future distributions of land use.

The public consultation campaign included public surveys and a series of open public meetings (approximately 21), that were intended to develop a value base on which to develop and evaluate growth scenarios in the region (Westland Resource Group [d] March 1995: 1). A questionnaire that was developed by consultants with input from the RDN staff was sent out to 1,800 people in the region (Appendix C). The sample was drawn randomly, with 600 names in each of the three areas: City of Nanaimo, the municipalities of

Parksville and Qualicum Beach, and the unincorporated areas in the regional district (Table 8).

Table 8
GMP SURVEY SAMPLE IN THE RDN

	Sent Out	Valid Returns	Percent Return
Nanaimo	600	323	53.8%
Parksville and Qualicum Beach	600	361	60.2%
Rural Area North	300	201	67.0%
Rural Area South	300	152	50.7%
Totals	1,800	1,037	57.6%

(Westland Resource Group [d] March 1995:1)

The *Regional Challenge and Choice* program used both technical information and public perspectives to define the growth issues and develop an approach for dealing with growth that would be acceptable to the residents, businesses and other interest groups in the RDN (Westland Resource Group [a] March 1995). A series of background reports was prepared by Westland Resource Group, as follows:

- Population, demographic, and economic forecasts,
- A land inventory analysis,
- Utility and infrastructure report,
- Growth management and urban form options,
- Mobility approaches,
- Public survey results: Growth management issues
- Growth management scenarios

(Westland Resource Group [c] March 1995)

These seven reports summarized the technical findings and were used for developing the RDN Growth Management Plan.

The land inventory analysis report revealed that most jurisdictions in the RDN could meet the needs of projected population growth for the next 25 years by developing land that was already slated for housing (Westland Resource Group [e] March 1995). This meant that the RDN had available land supply to accommodate the growth forecasts for the next 25 years. However, this developable land was spread throughout the RDN and the report explained the need for planning to ensure future growth improved communities, and did not permanently alter or degrade the rural character.

The mobility approaches report explained and summarized ways that the RDN could plan to create an integrated land use and transportation network in the region (Westland Resource Group [f] March 1995). The report urged the RDN to strategise alternative transportation methods, such as pedestrian and bicycle trails, to reduce pollution and congestion. It also alluded to strategising for better mixes of residential, commercial, and institutional uses in communities, as a way of improving mobility in the RDN.

The urban form report focused on the causes of urban sprawl in the RDN. The report emphasized planning for the development of complete communities (that would create more vibrant, attractive, people-oriented,

compact, high-density communities) throughout the RDN. These developments would ultimately house the population growth and be an alternative to the low-density development that had characterised recent practice (Westland Resource Group [b] March 1995). A number of urban form options were discussed that were seen as alternatives to sprawl, and that could possibly be part of the RDN GMP :

1. **Centralized:** Urban development concentrated in a single urban centre. In the RDN, for instance, centralized development would involve redevelopment and densification of downtown Nanaimo, with all other parts of the region relegated to supporting functions.
2. **Compact:** A relatively dense form of development, in which the intensity of land use is increased to prevent or greatly reduce the amount of land needed to serve a community's needs.
3. **Complete Community:** A complete community contains a mix of land uses in a compact form to facilitate easy accessibility to work, recreation and services by foot, bicycle, or transit.
4. **Hamlet:** A rural village or settlement, in which a mix of services and residential development is built in a form that preserves land surrounding the hamlet for rural uses such as forestry and agriculture.
5. **Neotraditional:** A school of urban design that encourages compact, mixed use development on a grid system of streets. Neotraditional settlements are pedestrian-scale and feature design elements such as small front-yard setbacks, alleys for utilities and garage access, while achieving affordability through innovative design methods.
6. **Nodal:** Providing a network of small, concentrated service and employment centres surrounded closely by residential development. Nodal development disperses development among nodes rather than spreading along a linear corridor or concentrating it in a single core.
7. **Open Space Design:** An approach to subdivision that follows four steps: (1) identify environmental or heritage protection areas, (2) identify potential buildable areas and locate building envelopes to emphasize amenities, (3) provide a circulation system, and (4) draw lot lines. The approach is intended to protect rural and environmental values while improving residential quality.
8. **Satellite Cities:** Development of new settlements whenever a specific area reaches a defined size or population, thereby avoiding

continuous sprawl or densification. For instance, if the City of Nanaimo or Parksville reaches a planned maximum size, future growth might be channeled to a new community created in the RDN.

9. **Transit-Oriented-Development (TOD):** A nodal, mixed-use development of commercial, office, residential, and public uses designed to promote pedestrian access to most services and transit access between TODs. Ideally, TODs are located on dedicated transit stops and contain sufficient density to support transit.
10. **Urban Village:** Complete, compact nodes of development encouraged through redevelopment of existing urban areas or designed as part of new communities. Urban villages are intended to create or re-create neighborhoods that have community spirit and in which local employment and service needs are met in a pedestrian-orientated form.

(Westland Resource Group [b] March 1995:25-26)

The population report examined the likely rates of growth in the RDN up to the year 2021 (the time-frame of the Regional Challenge and Choice program). The report suggested a 66% increase in population over the present population, estimated to be approximately 120,000 people (Westland Resource Group [g] March 1995). With this population growth estimate the report estimated that it would produce approximately 39,000 new housing units in the region (Ibid). The report was used as a planning tool to strategise for projected population in the RDN, and changing demographic trends.

The utility and infrastructure report documented how growth will affect groundwater and surface water supplies, sewage treatment, storm drainage, and solid waste management (Westland Resource Group [c] March 1995).

The report estimated the levels of demand for additional utilities and

infrastructure that will be needed in the RDN up to the year 2021, under existing development trends. This information was used to identify and strategise for certain threshold limits for the supply of water and sewage capacities in their communities.

The final report, and probably the most important, was a summary of survey responses. The Westland Resource Group and the RDN developed a survey to identify growth management concerns. The report documented a high level of public concern over growth management issues (Westland Resource Group March [d]1995). This information was critical to the articulation of the Growth Management Plan because it pointed to eight major growth management concerns in the RDN, including (in order of frequency of response):

- safety and security
- pollution
- traffic congestion
- loss of natural environment
- declining water quality and supply
- sewage treatment
- urban sprawl, and
- changing neighborhood character

(Westland Resource Group [a] March 1995:4)

The RDN prioritized their later programming efforts to try and deal with these concerns through objectives and policy development in the Growth Management Plan.

All of the background reports were used to support the preparation of a vision statement and scenario options for the RDN Growth Management Plan. The vision statement reflected a sense of the goals the residents of the RDN wanted to achieve, through the growth management scenario options.

The programming steps in the second year generated a tremendous amount of information on the public's support for and views toward the draft Plan, and provided the RDN with the necessary technical data to structure a number of Scenario Options for dealing with future development and growth. However, all of the planning and programming of the RDN GMP to this point was directed to a detailed Growth Management/ Land Use Plan, rather than a more general regional growth strategy exercise.

In the third year (1995), the programming for the Regional Challenge and Choice initiative had the consultants and the RDN representatives completing Scenario Options for regional growth planning. These were released for public feedback on what option was felt to be the best for the future of the region. Three scenarios were generated, along with two alternative perspectives:

<i>Scenario A</i>	Dispersed Development , based on full build-out of land as proposed in Official Community Plans or as would result from a continuation of present trends.
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<i>Scenario B</i>	Multiple Nodes , in which future development would occur in designated areas where mixed land uses would prevail. A variety of public amenities (including open space) would be provided within walking distance of residential areas and alternatives to the automobile would be emphasized. Both urban and rural nodes were identified.
<i>Scenario C</i>	Urban Area Focus , would share the nodal approach of Scenario B, but all development would occur within the containment boundaries surrounding existing urban areas, and limited development would occur in rural areas.

In addition to these three scenarios, the RDN provided the public with two alternative perspectives:

No-growth alternative, in which growth would be slowed dramatically, and halted as soon as possible.

Satellite settlements, in which future growth would occur in "new towns" outside the existing urbanized coastal corridor (Regional District of Nanaimo Growth Management Plan 1997: 103).

The RDN generated specific scenarios that considered the existing land use patterns in the region and covered the full spectrum of alternatives for guiding development and population growth in the future.

There was the maintenance of the status quo with Scenario A, where all future development decisions would continue to be processed in the same manner as they have always been. Then there is a possibly more progressive option, portrayed in Scenario B, which would move the region's communities toward better development patterns. Scenario C focuses on

urban/development containment and portrays a stronger image of what might be evaluated as a more sustainable future.

The RDN also provided for what some might see as a drastic approach to managing development in the future, with the 'no-growth' alternative. This alternative seemed to be seen as a positive and progressive measure for a community or a region to embrace (Connelly and Thomas, 2000).

Finally, the RDN suggested the 'satellite settlement' alternative, that would have the region develop new communities outside the existing urbanized corridors. This scenario option would seem to promote sprawling development, but it would possibly allow the creation of new communities to be developed in a more efficient, equitable and sustainable manner.

Through the scenario options and alternative perspectives, the RDN covered a broad spectrum relating to current ideas promoting quality development of their communities. They left it up to the public to decide for themselves what they felt was the best scenario to follow. There was a public review process consisting of eleven open houses with technical analyses of the scenario options. Meetings of elected officials and local government staffs followed these public reviews to collect their perceptions. This consultation and examination led to settling upon a preferred scenario option for the region, and the drafting of a Vision Statement. The public chose Scenario B (47%)

as the Preferred Scenario followed by Scenario C (28%) with only (7%) of the region's respondents choosing to continue with the existing situation (Regional District of Nanaimo, 1997).

The region's public had identified that they were in favour of change and were willing to move toward a new future. Once these steps were accomplished, the RDN staff prepared the first draft of the Preferred Scenario Draft Plan. The Preferred Scenario formed the basis of the Growth Management Plan in the RDN. The Board gave the Draft Plan Bylaw its first two readings and then there was municipal and senior governmental review. The public was involved in the review of this first draft and their comments were taken into consideration. At the end of the third year, a public hearing on the Preferred Scenario Draft Plan Bylaw was held and the RDN staff collected and summarized all of the public comments.

The extensive public review of the Draft Growth Management Plan uncovered a number of concerns. The RDN political representatives realized that major revisions to the Draft Plan were needed. In the fourth year (1996), there was extensive revision of the Draft Plan to address all of the new concerns of the RDN residents. The major concerns centered on a belief that the Plan deal only with regional issues, rather than trying to plan in detail for local issues. The public's local political representatives wanted less such detail. This almost required a complete revision, but the RDN staff believed

that this detailed approach worked well because it was easier to take information out of the Draft Plan than to try and strategise for new information to be put in (Connelly and Thomas, 2000). The public consultation of the revised GMP involved ten open public information and discussion meetings and two formal public hearings. The RDN initially felt that they would be able to complete the Growth Management Plan approval process with two regional public meetings. The 10 public meetings far exceeded their programming expectations for the final stages of the Growth Management Plan (Connelly and Thomas, 2000).

The concern with too much local detail in the GMP seems to be a direct consequence of the RDN having focused from the beginning on developing a regional land use plan rather than a regional growth strategy.

The Minister of Municipal Affairs brought the RDN revised Growth Management Plan under the jurisdiction of the *Growth Strategies Act*. However, the GSA did not extensively change the content of the Growth Management Plan in the RDN (Connelly and Thomas, 2000). The majority of the programming and strategising had already been completed for the RDN Growth Management Plan under the Regional Challenge and Choice initiative. The only specific requirement that was not met by the RDN Growth Management Plan, with respect to the GSA legislation, was for housing (Ibid).

In January 1997 the RDN Board adopted the Growth Management Plan, and the implementation stage began. The final GMP for the RDN incorporated an entire set of policies and guidelines to achieve their growth management goals and support their vision statement, instead of planning for selectively adopting policies in the future. They felt the latter approach would reduce the effectiveness of the overall program. The process of implementation of the RDN GMP is consistent with the *Growth Strategies Act*, where member municipalities and the RDN have prepared context statements in their Official Community Plans that comply with the policies described in the GMP. The context statements identify the relationship between OCPs and the GMP, with regard to:

- social, economic, and environmental objectives;
- population and employment;
- housing, transportation, Regional District services, parks, and natural areas;
- economic development ;
- other elements contained in the Growth Management Plan;
- how the OCP is to be made consistent with the Growth Management Plan (Regional District of Nanaimo, 1997: 86).

The implementation of the GMP requires the complete participation and active support of the RDN, member municipalities, the public, and senior government.

The RDN has committed to the development of special studies on outstanding regional issues as the GMP is implemented. The RDN staff will complete these studies, with help from various groups and agencies. The RDN list of special reports includes:

- Regional Economic and Industrial Land Planning Study.
- Regional Parks System Plan implementation.
- Regional aquifer mapping and groundwater inventory.
- Coastal zone inventory and management.
- A study of ways to make land use, servicing, and building regulations in urban areas and rural villages more effective in achieving the goals of the Growth Management Plan.
- Regional multi-modal transportation plan.
- Study of the cost of private automotive use, and ways of encouraging the use of alternative transportation modes.
- Methods of advancing commercially viable agriculture in the region.
- Water and watershed management.
- Guidelines for evaluating ALR and FLR exclusion or inclusion applications.
- Examination of implications of a "steady state" model for the RDN, including carrying capacity of land and water, quality of life versus standard of living, economic sustainability, and examples of steady state models from other places.

(Regional District of Nanaimo, 1997:89)

The RDN has also developed a monitoring and indicator data management program that will inform the annual progress reports for the GMP. The monitoring will be used to define whether there has been any progress made towards the region's vision and goals outlined in the GMP. The annual reports assist decision-makers and inform the RDN staff whether

implementation actions are creating the desired results. The Annual

Reports in the RDN include reference to the following sections:

- Summary of the goals and policies of the Growth Management Plan.
- A list of performance benchmarks (standards or targets related to each growth management plan goal and policy).
- Progress mileposts or indicators (to indicate the degree of progress made toward achieving the performance benchmarks).
- Description of the monitoring program undertaken by the RDN and other jurisdictions involved in implementing the Growth Management Plan.
- Summary of organizational actions taken to comply with the Growth Management Plan.
- Overall summary of progress, including statements of achievements, obstacles, and actions to improve performance.

(Regional District of Nanaimo, 2000:1)

The RDN has also built in a dispute resolution process that is designed to improve co-operation among jurisdictions in the region. The process used is modelled on the *Growth Strategies Act* framework for reaching agreement during adoption of the GMP.

3.3 PLANNING FOR GROWTH IN THE RDN

The RDN has developed a Growth Management Plan that will continue to accommodate ongoing growth. The primary concern of the RDN GMP is how to grow into the future. The RDN has not addressed the question of whether slowing growth in the region will actually improve communities. Fodor (1999) explains that slowing growth in an area will improve it. He states that creating a stable, sustainable community creates the potential for an area “to reach

new heights in virtually every area of a community endeavor” (Fodor 1999, 15). These include opportunities to:

- Improve local quality of life;
- Improve public services (without new taxes);
- Maintain or improve environmental quality;
- Protect local agricultural and resource lands;
- Preserve the community’s cultural and historic heritage;
- Provide economic security and well-being for all residents.

(Fodor 1999: 15)

The RDN has taken steps to contain spatial expansion of the region’s built environment through urban containment boundaries, but they are subject to amendments every five years, with the approval of the Regional Board. The RDN GMP will accommodate population growth. This usually goes hand-in-hand with urban growth or quantitative expansion of the built environment because development takes place in anticipation of future population growth (Fodor 1999). This section of the study identifies whether the RDN accepts limits to growth, and analyses the reaction of member municipalities to the RDN GMP.

One of the interesting findings of the Public Survey Results, produced by Westland Resource Group for the RDN, was that most people who completed the survey (50%) felt that the RDN should take an active role in managing the rate, location, type, and limits of growth to protect the ‘good things’ about the region, such as a safe place to live, natural beauty of the region, environmental quality, sense of community, outdoor recreational

opportunities, employment opportunities and cultural opportunities (Westland Resource Group [d] March 1995:14-16).

Many residents who participated in the *Regional Challenge and Choice* programming felt that attaining sustainability in the region should be the central focus of the programming of the Growth Management Plan (Westland Resource Group [a] March 1995). Residents were concerned about the region's ecological diversity, which spans fish-bearing streams, marine and coastal ecosystems, fertile soils and productive forests and wetlands. Past development in the RDN has degraded ecosystems through resource extraction, urban sprawl, and pollution (Ibid). The development of the Regional Challenge and Choice program was premised on an appreciation that the Regional Growth Management Plan could not reverse much of the environmental damage that was done in the past, but it could introduce valuable development options to reduce such future negative impacts on the region's environment.

However, it seemed that these findings had little influence on the RDN political representation, because they were unwilling to accept any limits to growth in the Growth Management Plan (Connelly and Thomas, 2000). This position was rationalized by the RDN consultants in 1995 as follows:

"The Regional Challenge and Choice program focuses on maintaining quality of life in RDN communities rather than on achieving specific population or rate of growth targets. The project assumes that growth pressures will continue, but that the exact rate and distribution of growth

among communities cannot be predicted with precision. An important premise of the project is to ensure that growth is used to improve the quality of communities, to protect the environment, and improve service efficiency. This approach seeks to design urban form and frame development regulations in ways that will benefit RDN residents and protect the environment regardless of growth rate” (Westland Resource Group [a] March 1995:6).

This is consistent with an ultimate interest in development as qualitative improvement, by trying to take the spotlight off growth as quantitative expansion (but not wanting to seem to ‘block’ such growth).

When deciding on their growth strategy option, it is apparent that the RDN Board and Administration focused on how growth should occur in the region. They chose to disregard pursuing the concern of whether growth should occur at all. The RDN chose the ‘planned growth’ or ‘smart growth’ option for growth management, with the intention of trying to positively influence the quality of the growth while minimizing negative effects on the region.

‘Growth planning’ in the RDN involves directing new development in ways that will reduce negative impacts on quality of life, resource lands, environmental quality, and other qualities associated with healthy communities. The policy framework of the RDN GMP is used as the technical basis to anticipate and accommodate population growth and deal with it in an effective, efficient and equitable manner (i.e. with a bias in favour of qualitative improvement).

The elected officials in the RDN did not feel that they could identify an optimal size for all communities in the region, beyond which the quality of life for its residents would decline, because it was beyond their knowledge or expertise and they were not prepared to use this measure (Connelly and Thomas, 2000). They believed that they could not stop growth in the region, but they could better accommodate it with management efforts, urban containment design, and mobility planning. Urban containment and nodal development will certainly provide a better and more efficient urban form, but these management efforts do not necessarily ensure a sustainable future.

The RDN Growth Management Plan does not encourage continuous quantitative expansion in the region, but it does not discourage it either. This effectively means that the RDN Growth Management Plan is 'growth-accommodating' in its underlying agenda:

"the Growth Management Plan does not seek to impose growth targets on any area. Rather, it provides a framework within which communities can determine how much and what kind of growth they will accept" (Regional District of Nanaimo Growth Management Plan 1997:17).

Gabor Zovanyi (1998) would argue that this form of growth management continues a pro-growth legacy in spite of the nature of current problems associated with on-going growth in the region. He would argue that the RDN GMP has conceded the problems associated with growth, "but asserts the possibility of continuing to reap the benefits of ongoing growth if it is properly planned and its negative effects adequately mitigated" (Zovanyi 1998: 85).

This view would be directed around the concept of 'balanced growth' where the needs of the environment are balanced with the need to accommodate growth in a responsible way.

Zovanyi would also argue that the RDN GMP is more of a land use plan directed at a 'managing to grow option', rather than towards real efforts to control or limit future growth (Zovanyi 1998: 86). He would argue further that if the RDN wanted to work towards achieving sustainable development it would have to change the focus of the GMP, abandon the pro-growth orientation, strategise towards limits to growth, and reference ecological sustainability as the primary 'growth' management focus.

The RDN GMP acknowledges that future growth is likely to occur and advocates using these growth pressures to improve the communities within the region. The only mention of 'limits to growth' in the Plan is a comment on the fact that growth cannot occur forever, because it will inevitably start to cause environmental and social problems, and the Plan will eventually have to adapt to that (Regional District of Nanaimo 1997: 18). Also, the GMP states that each municipality and electoral area will define acceptable rates of growth, and if necessary, set limits (based on land availability, servicing needs, actions needed to obtain necessary open space, and resident willingness to accept community change) (Regional District of Nanaimo 1997: 30). These mentions of limits to growth are vague because they may

never be enforced, and they may only be implemented when the environmental and social problems have already occurred, to a difficult-to-remedy extent.

Neil Connelly (2000) stated that the RDN sees population growth as a benefit, if it is managed properly, because it will promote economic development opportunities and help offset the servicing costs for the region residents (taxes). The approach the GMP is taking may not be truly sustainable in terms of the existing literature surrounding the concept of sustainable development because it does not advocate strict measures to limit growth in quantitative expansion terms. The Plan, in many ways, simply promotes growth-accommodating measures, that may not lead towards a truly sustainable development outcome.

It is difficult to evaluate if this growth-accommodating agenda will be successful or will prove problematic in the RDN because the Growth Management Plan is still in its infancy. The GMP seems to involve some bold and progressive steps toward managing future change, and articulates a vision of a seemingly desirable future, but time will tell if the growth-accommodating agenda will really achieve, or actually block, the realisation of the regional vision. The policies created under the Plan are very focused on the future goals of the region, and should furnish positive planning tools to combat the challenges and avoid the problems that may lie ahead. However,

there may still come a time when the RDN will have to place limits on growth (as quantitative expansion). The strategizing towards this may come in stages through the projected five-year amendments to the Growth Management Plan.

The City of Nanaimo had limited input into the development of the RDN GMP (Fletcher 2001). The City of Nanaimo was involved in the development of a land use plan (Plan Nanaimo) at the same time as the RDN GMP was being developed. However, the City of Nanaimo agreed with the 8 goals and all of the policies developed under the RDN GMP. The City felt that developing Plan Nanaimo at the same time as the RDN GMP was beneficial because it produced better policy relating to land use in the City (Ibid.). The policy adopted by the RDN GMP produced guidelines and a framework for Plan Nanaimo to work towards. In many areas (i.e. environment), Plan Nanaimo created stronger policy than what was included in the RDN GMP. There was minimal negative reaction to the development of the RDN GMP by City of Nanaimo residents (Ibid.). The elected officials at the City of Nanaimo supported the development of the RDN GMP because they believed it would only enhance the Plan Nanaimo effort of regulating land use in the City's jurisdiction (Ibid.).

There was minimal conflict between the City of Nanaimo and the RDN through the development of the GMP. The only conflicting issues were policy

implementation, urban containment boundary amendments, and problems with what the RDN staff has termed 'minor amendments' of the GMP. The City believes that the RDN has developed strong policies towards land use. However, the City wanted to be able to make the decisions as to how the City of Nanaimo was going to implement the RDN GMP policies. The RDN is permitted to amend the Urban Contain Boundaries every five years. The City of Nanaimo elected representation wanted to be able to amend the Urban Containment Boundaries in the City's jurisdiction every 3 years because this matched elections for public representation for City Council representation (Ibid.). Finally, there have been conflicts between the City and the RDN over what the RDN has termed 'minor amendments' to the GMP. For example, the RDN wanted to amend the GMP to ban backyard burning, but this minor amendment would have a huge impact on the City of Nanaimo staff resources because they would have to amend both Plan Nanaimo and the zoning bylaw.

The City of Nanaimo completed the context statement in Plan Nanaimo in 1998 (Fletcher 2001). It included reference to the City having the authority to amend the Urban Containment Boundaries in the City's jurisdiction every three years. The City of Nanaimo developed the context statement in Plan Nanaimo by matching all of the RDN GMP goals with the City's objectives in Plan Nanaimo. They developed a context statement that set out the

relationship between the 8 goals of the RDN GMP and objectives of Plan Nanaimo (Ibid.).

The City of Nanaimo believes that the RDN GMP is very organized and will benefit the region (Fletcher 2001). However, the City staff felt that there was too much information produced on this “regional land use plan” (Ibid.), and the programming and implementation has been very time-consuming for the City of Nanaimo staff.

The City of Nanaimo recognized that the City cannot grow the same way as the city has in the past (Fletcher 2001). The servicing of continued expansion of the built environment cannot continue because it will be too expensive for City residents. However, the elected officials for the City of Nanaimo have not accepted placing physical limits to growth, as the existing Urban Containment Boundary can accommodate an extra 70, 000 people and is subject to amendments every 3 years (Ibid.).

The City of Parksville has a different perspective of the RDN GMP. The City maintains that they contributed input into the development of the RDN GMP but some of their input was not used. The City of Parksville believes that the practical impact of the RDN GMP was negative for their jurisdiction (Jackson 2001). The adoption of the RDN GMP has not benefited their jurisdiction and has been very problematic to deal with (ibid.). There are a number of

conflicting issues between the RDN and the City of Parksville. One of the biggest conflicting issues is the designation of commercial space in the region. The GMP intensified this conflict by designating a large commercial centre on the north end of the City of Nanaimo jurisdiction, but did not give the City of Parksville the same commercial opportunities. Parksville believes that the RDN has not generated economic development on an equal basis throughout the region (Ibid.). The new commercial development on the north end of the City of Nanaimo is a draw for the residents in Parksville. This has resulted in increased commercial development in Nanaimo and a loss of commercial activity and opportunity in Parksville (Ibid.). Parksville believes that the GMP did not give their jurisdiction the same opportunity for commercial expansion.

One other conflict that the City of Parksville had with the RDN GMP was that there were no provisions for down-zoning (Jackson 2001). Parksville believed that this completely undermined the goals of the GMP because there were numerous areas on the outskirts of the designated urban nodes that were already zoned for high-density development (Ibid.). Parksville's jurisdictional boundary is also located adjacent to an Electoral Area (F) in the RDN that has no zoning provisions regulating land use. This area is not subject to the same provisions and regulation under the GMP. This fact has caused some discrepancies between the RDN and the City of Parksville.

The City of Parksville felt that the development of the Context Statement in their OCP was a relatively easy task because their Plan dealt with all of the RDN GMP goals. The only exception had to do with farmland protection. The City of Parksville compared the goals and policies contained in their OCP to the eight goals and policies of the RDN GMP and related this comparison in the Context Statement. The City of Parksville OCP will continue to work towards achieving all eight goals of the RDN GMP.

There was virtually no positive reaction towards the RDN GMP by the City of Parksville residents or elected officials, especially after all of the economic development constraints caused by the GMP were realized. The City of Parksville thought the RDN GMP was unfair and contains very little flexibility. Parksville believes the real downfall of the RDN GMP is insufficient planning for regional economic development (Jackson 2001). The City of Parksville was also not open to placing physical limits on growth.

3.4 THE PROVINCIAL LEGISLATION AND THE REGIONAL DISTRICT OF NANAIMO GROWTH MANAGEMENT PLAN

The RDN Growth Management Plan should incorporate policy and guidelines development that addresses all of the 14 provincial goals which relate to current thinking in planning for sustainable development. This section examines the extent to which the RDN GMP addresses all of the provincial goals stipulated in the Regional Growth Strategies legislation.

Even though the RDN GMP was developed before the adoption of the growth strategies legislation, it has managed to conform to the majority of the fourteen provincial goals that promote efficient and healthy human settlement.

- The RDN Plan has addressed the provincial concern for avoiding sprawl and ensuring that development takes place where adequate facilities exist (through urban containment boundaries that will regulate and control quantitative expansion of the built environment and policies that promote nodal development). It also includes policies and guidelines that regulate servicing under the development of a regional water supply system and a liquid waste management plan. All servicing decisions will be consistent with the goals of the RDN GMP. The RDN GMP has also created policy for water conservation to protect water supply. However, the RDN GMP has not developed policy relating to all natural resource use or full-cost accounting on new capital works.
- The RDN Plan has addressed settlement patterns that minimize the use of automobiles and encourage alternative methods of transport (through policies and guidelines that promote and support urban containment and mobility alternatives). The RDN plans to complete a special study on the cost of automobile use and generate ways to plan for alternative transportation.
- The RDN Plan has addressed the efficient movement of goods and people through their mobility policies and guidelines.
- The RDN Plan has addressed the protection of environmentally-sensitive areas through environmental policies and guidelines. However, the 1999 annual report stipulates that little has been done to achieve a co-ordinated approach for protection of environmentally-sensitive areas in the region.
- The RDN Plan has addressed maintaining the integrity of a secure and productive resource base through policies that state that OCPs in the region will include policies supporting the retention of land in the Agricultural Land Reserve and the Forest Land Reserve.
- The RDN Plan has addressed the goal of generating economic development that supports the unique character of communities through policies and guidelines that promote and support a vibrant and sustainable economy in the region.

- The RDN Plan has addressed reducing and preventing water and air pollution through the environmental protection and mobility policies and guidelines. However, the Plan has not sufficiently included policies or guidelines that regulate land pollution or groundwater.
- The RDN Plan has not addressed the issue of adequate, affordable and appropriate housing.
- The RDN has addressed having adequate inventories of suitable land and resources for future settlement. The RDN hired Westland Resource Group to complete a land inventory analysis for the region that mapped suitable areas for development.
- The RDN Plan has addressed the protection of the quality of ground water and surface water through the environmental protection policies. However, this policy may be weak because there is a lack of regulation for the use of groundwater. The RDN has stated that the lack of provincial regulation on groundwater use may limit the regional district's ability to manage the resource (Regional District of Nanaimo Growth Management Plan 1997: 66)
- The RDN Plan has promoted settlement patterns that minimize the risks associated with natural hazards through urban containment boundaries, nodal settlement patterns and policies designed to protect and preserve rural integrity. However, the urban containment boundaries can be amended with the RDN Board approval and the nodal settlement pattern is not mandatory.
- The RDN Plan has addressed preserving, creating, and linking urban and rural open space through an open space protection program and the implementation of a regional parks system plan. However the 1999 Annual Report stated that more work is needed for a co-ordinated effort towards the protection of open space.
- The RDN Plan has not addressed planning for energy supply and promoting efficient use, conservation and alternative forms of energy.
- The RDN Plan has not addressed good stewardship of land, sites and structures with cultural heritage value.

In terms of addressing the 14 provincial goals to advance long-term planning for sustainable development, the RDN Growth Management Plan has managed to address 11, with more work needed in the areas of

- Environmental protection;
- Resource protection;

- Policies that promote the reduction in land pollution;
- A more co-ordinated and co-operative effort towards the protection of open space in the region.

There are four provincial goals that the RDN may want to work towards to promote long-term planning for sustainable development in the region, including:

- Planning for energy supply and promoting efficient use, conservation and alternative forms of energy;
- Natural resource protection;
- Good stewardship of land, sites, and structures with cultural heritage value;
- Providing for adequate, affordable and appropriate housing.

If the RDN focuses on these objectives, it may translate into a revised growth management plan that more directly promotes sustainable development throughout the region. Meeting the objectives outlined by the provincial goals in the Regional Growth Strategies legislation will hasten the RDN explicitly adopting an ethic of sustainability to deal with increasingly urgent environmental and social concerns in the region. Overall, the RDN Growth Management Plan is relatively progressive in terms of its regulatory policy-making because it promotes eleven out of the fourteen goals of the province. If the RDN chooses to focus on those goals and objectives currently missing in the Growth Management Plan, it may represent a strong movement away from past development trends, promote future development that can enhance the quality of life, and significantly advance long-term planning for sustainable development in the region.

3.5 SUMMARY

The programming for the RDN Growth Management Plan was done before the provincial Growth Strategies Act (GSA) was introduced. However, the contents of the Plan have addressed and are consistent with eleven of the goals outlined in the GSA legislation, the only exceptions being the housing requirement, stewardship of cultural and heritage sites, and planning for energy supply. The RDN *Regional Challenge and Choice* program underwent minor changes to adapt to the requirements of the GSA and to become the region's regional growth strategy, even though it is still referred to as a **Regional Growth Management Plan** (Connelly and Thomas, 2000).

The RDN Growth Management Plan was designed to influence the official community plans, zoning bylaws, local service area functions, and other regulations prepared by local and regional government (Regional District of Nanaimo 1997). The RDN GMP was fairly progressive in addressing some growth alternatives, such as urban containment through growth boundaries that will attempt to obviate many of the negative impacts of past development patterns in the region, including sprawl. However, the GMP does not contest continued accommodation of population growth and does little to promote development as qualitative improvement. The main focus of the Growth Management Plan is on 'how' the region will grow in a better way. So far, it has not attempted to deal with 'whether' growth should occur at all at the regional level (although it doesn't rule out the possibility of the latter question

exercising particular localities and/or municipalities within the regional district).

The RDN Board was not open to the consideration of limiting growth through its GMP. Elected officials contended that they could not put a number on what the carrying capacity was for the region (Connelly and Thomas, 2000). The elected officials felt that they could accommodate continued population growth through management efforts, urban containment, detailed development design, and careful transportation planning. The RDN felt that continued population growth was essential for realizing economic development opportunities, and was needed to help bring down the tax costs of servicing in the region. This political stance favouring future population and growth (as quantitative expansion) worked well in sustaining the necessary political and public support for the Growth Management Plan process (Ibid).

The RDN GMP deals essentially with the 'how growth should occur' approach to growth management. It did not provide for any consideration of 'whether growth should occur at all', 'what kind of growth should occur', or the question of 'what kind of development should occur in the future'. The key initial desire in the RDN case was to produce a land use plan on a regional scale, rather than a regional growth strategy directing new regional growth in ways that would possibly reduce negative impacts, through

comprehensive planning and policy frameworks. The problem with this agenda is that it does not address the question of the quantity of regional growth that is desirable, or the acceptable rate of growth that can be sustained. The RDN Board has recognized that there are 'limits to growth', but is unwilling to date to actively plan for such limits in the GMP. The Board has not recognized or determined an optimal size for the region's population, where the quality of life for residents can confidently be maintained or improved.

The RDN experienced an immense population growth increase in the early 1990s that triggered work on the Growth Management Plan, but the political will did not exist for discussing any limits to growth (Connelly and Thomas, 2000). At present, the RDN is not experiencing the same growth pressures as in the early 1990s. However, the Plan continues to effectively address 'how growth as quantitative expansion should occur' in the region.

The Westland Resource Group was the consultant hired to prepare a number of technical reports for the RDN Growth Management Plan. They have stated that accepting the 'carrying capacity' concept to human populations "is difficult and potentially dangerous" (Westland Resource Group [b] March, 1995 :30). The RDN political stance seems to support the implicit Westland Resource Group view that technological improvements will always help to increase or extend the carrying capacity of a region (Westland Resource Group [b] March, 1995). Westland Resource Group and the RDN believed

that determining and referencing quality of life factors would be a better approach to guiding decision-making in the region. The RDN's view of future growth management seems to be rooted in the expectation of - at best - technological sustainability, rather than aiming for the higher ideal of ecological sustainability.

The RDN Growth Management Plan does not encourage continued quantitative expansion, but it promotes little to discourage it. The political belief seems to be that the RDN can retain quality communities using innovative planning and land use tactics for designing and building more complete communities. This may or may not promote a sustainable development future for the region. The RDN realizes that population growth and quantitative expansion of the built environment cannot continue indefinitely. They have mentioned the need for qualitative improvement (i.e. development without growth) in the constituent communities, but the GMP only mentions 'sustainable' once, and it relates to a 'sustainable economy' (Regional District of Nanaimo, 1997: 58).

The RDN, and other BC regional districts, could possibly benefit from a more 'developed' sustainable development framework in future planning and/or strategising. This would include addressing 'whether' growth (as quantitative expansion) should occur in the region, and would focus on promoting development (rather than growth) in the sense of qualitative improvement.

The RDN Growth Management Plan may offer an exemplary template, or be used as a resource, by other regions around BC for insights on growth management, ideas on urban containment, examples of collaborative planning, and information on programming tools and techniques. The RDN experience may help other regions across B.C make the transition away from poor planning practice in relation to managing growth as quantitative expansion. The Plan has won the comprehensive policy and planning award from the Planning Institute of British Columbia for the unprecedented level of collaboration between local government, and the provincial government, and for the extensive public consultation effort (B.C Ministry of Municipal Affairs [a] September 1998). However, it is more of a Land Use Plan rather than a regional strategy for managing growth. The Land Use Plan focus may be far too elaborate for ready application elsewhere in B.C, if the focus is truly a Regional Growth Strategy rather than a Growth Management Plan.

The main differences between the RDN case and the more rural areas around BC are that it contains a larger urban core and has higher transportation demands. Otherwise, it shares a number of land use similarities with rural-based Regional Districts in B.C because it contains abundant natural resource land (FLR, ALR and open space), large rural land bases, and a number of population nodes.

The programming strategy undertaken by the RDN would be far too elaborate for a regional growth strategy in the more rural regions of BC.

However, there should be an effort to combine the good programming tactics involved in the RDN case with a new vision of generating a growth strategy that truly operates explicitly within a prescribed sustainable development framework.

The RDN Growth Management Plan provides development policies and guidelines that have the potential to improve local quality of life, improve public services, maintain and improve environmental quality, protect local agricultural and resource lands, and provide economic security for its residents. However, the RDN may want to enhance the growth planning effort by explicitly adopting and integrating more specific sustainability objectives and goals into their Growth Management Plan. This change may ensure a future that does not perpetuate irresponsible patterns of development. The focus would be on generating qualitative improvement rather than accepting continued population growth and the associated quantitative expansion of the built environment.

CHAPTER 4

THE REGIONAL DISTRICT OF CENTRAL OKANAGAN AND THOMPSON-NICOLA REGIONAL DISTRICT GROWTH STRATEGIES

4.0 INTRODUCTION

When the main research of the RDN case was nearing completion, two new growth management strategies were completed by the Regional District of Central Okanagan (RDCO) and the Thompson-Nicola Regional District (TNRD) in central BC. Both of these Regional Growth Strategies are much more general than the Regional District of Nanaimo Growth Management Plan, but are much more focused on certain key regional issues (Hawksworth, 2000). The Thompson-Nicola Regional District Growth Strategy may be of particular interest because it is much more rural than the Regional District of Nanaimo and may offer a better program option for growth strategising in rural/non-metropolitan regional districts in BC. This chapter analyses the RDCO and TNRD Regional Growth Strategies to clarify the differences between the RDN case and to better inform the development of programming and policy options for a regional growth strategy in the Regional District of East Kootenay, discussed in chapter 5.

4.1 PLANNING FOR GROWTH IN THE REGIONAL DISTRICT OF CENTRAL OKANAGAN

The Regional District of Central Okanagan (RDCO) adopted its Regional Growth Management Strategy on June 26, 2000 (B.C. Ministry of Municipal

Affairs [a] June 2000). The Okanagan was identified as a high priority area for growth strategising by the provincial government (Hartley 2001). The greatest factor that persuaded the RDCO to initiate the development of a regional growth strategy was that it provided a forum for participation in parallel activities such as the undertaking of the Okanagan Valley Transportation Plan and the Crown Land & Resource Management Plan (Ibid.). There were also a variety of conflicting issues that prompted the undertaking of a regional growth strategy in the RDCO. They included cross-boundary issues, equity of services relative to tax base, and incorporated – unincorporated first nation service agreements (Ibid.).

The RDCO Regional Growth Management Strategy was developed in three phases. The first phase was started in 1996 and included collecting demographic data, housing statistics and conducting a land capability assessment to gain a sense of what existed within the region. This involved a comprehensive inventory and mapping of the physical environment, the transportation system, water supply, sewer and waste disposal systems, community facilities, and a description of the economic environment (Regional District of Central Okanagan, 2000). This was followed by an analysis of growth and development trends in the region, based on focus group discussions.

The second phase began in 1997 and was more analytical as the RDCO completed an analysis on the costs related to growth and the potential carrying capacity of the region, encompassing the notion of living within reasonable means, designing communities that are safe and healthy and recognizing that there are limits to growth (B.C Ministry of Municipal Affairs [a] July 1997:8). It also included an in-depth analysis of the planning and policy included in the provincial legislation and a review of the local government regulations and policy pertaining to growth management (i.e. Official Community Plans).

The RDCO analysed other jurisdictions across Canada and the United States that had implemented growth management, to evaluate various approaches, benefits, limitations and the effectiveness of the programs. The growth management precedents that the RDCO researched while developing their growth strategy included the Regional District of Nanaimo, Greater Vancouver Regional District, Capital Regional District, Thompson-Nicola Regional District, Washington State, and Oregon State (Hartley 2001). They also drew on Prince George and Fraser Valley communities regarding aggregates and air quality (Ibid.). Leah Hartley (2001) expressed that the RDCO “learned from the best experiences and avoided the rest” (Ibid.). Also reviewed was what administrative requirements were needed to complete a growth strategy. The overall analysis informed the development of a growth strategy that addressed:

- Development form;
- Criteria, standards and controls that needed to be in place to ensure that growth is environmentally, economically and socially sustainable;
- Regional service delivery;
- Decision-making and governance (who is responsible for what);
- Financing growth.

(Regional District of Central Okanagan, 2000)

The third phase of the RDCO Regional Growth Management Strategy involved the preparation of an implementation strategy and a monitoring system, through government, agency and community consultation, that built on all of the collected data in phase one and two. This was established to ensure that the information and analysis remains current and accurate, and to allow the RDCO to evaluate the effectiveness of the Regional Growth Management Strategy, through indicators, benchmarks and targets.

A draft Growth Management Strategy Bylaw was completed in September 1999. The RDCO Regional Growth Management Strategy identifies a regional vision, common planning goals, objectives and policies that provide the basis for the development of action and implementation plans related to the seven key regional issues over a 20 year period including:

1. Air quality
2. Water (number 1 issue)
3. Environmental protection (Number 2 issue)
4. Housing
5. Transportation
6. Economic development

7. Governance and servicing

(B.C Ministry of Municipal Affairs [a] June 2000)

At the time of Bylaw approval, two key issues arose. First, there was not agreement on specific tactics; therefore, the Regional Growth Management Strategy Bylaw deals with goals and objectives, but contains few policies. Policies are presently being developed through a two-year program of reviewing the seven growth related issues in detail (outlined above). Second, following municipal elections and a change in municipal councils, the Regional Growth Management Strategy Bylaw was delayed at final reading (Hartley 2001). Facilitation was brought in (as per the regional growth strategies legislation in the *Local Government Act*) and the Bylaw was formally adopted on June 20, 2000 (B.C Ministry of Municipal Affairs [a] June 2000).

During the programming and development of the Regional Growth Strategy, the RDCO had three growth strategy co-ordinators. Tracy Corbett held the post from 1996 to 1998. Gary Stephan was in place as an interim co-ordinator for a few months in 1999, overseeing bylaw preparation. The RDCO retained Leah Hartley in 2000 as a co-ordinator for a two-year term to prepare seven discussion papers and implementation agreements between all affected municipalities, the regional district and the provincial government, relating to the seven key issues.

Generally, there was positive reaction to the development of the RDCO Regional Growth Strategy. There was definitely positive reaction to specific deliverables such as the regional aggregate supply and demand study, compilation of regional land use and employment projections, and air quality workshops (Hartley 2001).

The direct costs associated with the development and programming of the RDCO Regional Growth Strategy over four years included:

1996	\$40,000
1997	\$93,000
1998	\$103,000
1999	\$80,800
2000	<u>\$131,400 (projection)</u>
Total	\$ 448,200.00

(Hartley 2001)

The RDCO believes the development of the Regional Growth Strategy has various benefits and qualities associated with it. The Regional Growth Strategy is broad enough to focus on general aspects of growth without becoming mired in specific land use or servicing issues. It provides an ideal link between local and provincial planning (i.e. transit plans, Crown land management, pending water legislation, hospital facility/ school board plans). It facilitates sharing of data and resources and promotes the ability for cost savings (Hartley 2001).

4.2 PLANNING FOR GROWTH IN THE THOMPSON-NICOLA REGIONAL DISTRICT

The Thompson Nicola Regional District (TNRD) started its Regional Growth Strategy in 1995 and completed it on May 11, 2000 (B.C Ministry of Municipal Affairs [a] June 2000:1). It was the first local government to proceed under the Regional Growth Strategies legislation. This Regional Growth Strategy may be of particular interest to the RDEK and other rural regional districts because it shares many of the same regional characteristics.

The growth strategising began with background work and data collection completed by a consultant in 1995 and 1996. The TNRD reviewed other growth management precedents in the Greater Vancouver Regional District, Regional District of Nanaimo, Municipality of Langley, Washington State, and Oregon State. This research was used as a resource guide and it identified three areas of concern including:

- Growth is inevitable;
- Environmental quality is in jeopardy;
- Servicing levels and expectations must be clearly articulated and planned.

(Finley 2001)

The TNRD initiated the development of its Regional Growth Strategy because the region was beginning to experience rapid growth symptoms similar to those which threaten the very attributes and lifestyle opportunities that have contributed to making the region such an attractive place to live

(Finley 2001). The TNRD Board and staff knew that a co-operative and proactive planning approach was necessary if they were to avoid the dilemmas associated with high levels of growth (Ibid.). Other important factors contributing to the development of the Regional Growth Strategy included:

- The need for improved water quality management;
- Local governance and servicing issues;
- Need for economic diversification;
- The promotion of the principles of environmental conservation and sustainability.

(Finley 2001)

The budget for TNRD Regional Growth Strategy was \$128,995.00 (Finley 2001). However, this budget was actually consumed in the initial background research and report preparation phases of the growth strategy project (Ibid.). An additional \$35,000.00 was spent by the TNRD staff, following the departure of the original consulting firm, to revise the format of the Regional Growth Strategy and to guide it through the public hearings and adoption process (Ibid.).

The background work and data collection for the region produced an "Economic Profile and Analysis" and a report entitled "The Challenge of Change: Background to the Regional Growth Strategy" (Thompson-Nicola Regional District 2000:2). These two background reports informed the development of a draft issues and actions paper entitled "Managing Growth in the Thompson-Nicola Regional District" in 1997 (Ibid.) All three of these

analytical reports involved a region-wide consultative process that included input from the TNRD's Board of Directors, eight member municipalities, numerous participating senior government agencies, regional economic interests, First Nations and regional residents (Ibid.). The TNRD staff held a number of public meetings and open houses throughout the region to identify the critical issues that were facing the region including:

- Population growth pressure;
- Protection of resource lands, parks and recreation areas;
- Protection of community water sheds;
- Protection/ enhancement of visual corridors/amenity areas.

(Thompson-Nicola Regional District 2000:4)

Based on these critical issues the regional vision included a definition of a sustainable future for the region:

"To create a balance among goals relating to human settlement, economic development and environmental conservation, such that development actions do not significantly limit the options of future generations". (Thompson-Nicola Regional District 2000:5)

It also included a vision statement and a number of goals that the Regional Growth Strategy would work towards:

- Promote and encourage economic development;
- Protect and enhance the environment;
- Protect and maintain access to the resource base;
- Preserve the rural wilderness character of the region;
- Ensure adequate and appropriate services are provided;
- Maintain mobility throughout the region;
- Establish and maintain equity among the urban and rural centers;
- Ensure adequate range of housing opportunities are available;

- Promote regional collaboration on common issues;
 - Promote cooperative planning with First Nations.
- (Thompson-Nicola Regional District 2000:5)

There were no conflicting issues between the TNRD and affected municipalities. All participants involved in the development of the Regional Growth Strategy co-operatively participated and enthusiastically recognized the value of the project (Finley 2001). The elected officials at the TNRD unanimously supported the Regional Growth Strategy from its inception. They were instrumental in convincing the provincial government that the TNRD would be a suitable first candidate to embark upon a growth strategy under the new legislation in spite of its geographical location (outside of the target areas of the Lower Mainland and the Okanagan Valley). The majority of regional residents who actively participated in the development of the TNRD Regional Growth Strategy were supportive of the project (Ibid.). However, in spite of the TNRD's aggressive campaign to publicise the Regional Growth Strategy project and involve regional residents and groups, public participation remained marginal (Ibid.).

The greatest qualities that the TNRD believes the Regional Growth Strategy brings to the region include:

- The development of a regional vision;
 - Substantial improvements in intergovernmental awareness and co-operation;
 - Data sharing agreements.
- (Finley 2001)

Sustainable development was a key issue for the TNRD while developing the Regional Growth Strategy (Finley 2001). The TNRD maintains that its Strategy is not a land use plan, but rather a co-operative means of achieving a sustainable regional future (Ibid.). In this regard the TNRD Growth Strategy provides a framework for:

- Action on development and settlement issues by all participating levels of government;
- The co-ordination of land use, infrastructure investment and financial management;
- The encouragement of economic opportunity and affordable lifestyle choices
- The protection of the region's natural environment and amenities in concert with growth.

(Finley 2001)

The TNRD Regional Growth Strategy does not contain policy for limiting growth in the region. The TNRD believes that the Strategy will clarify their commitment to economic growth and diversity. It will also provide and promote more efficient servicing and long-range financial management which will all contribute to making the region a more attractive place to live and invest.

4.3 COMPARING THE RDN CASE WITH THE RDCO AND TNRD REGIONAL GROWTH STRATEGIES

The Growth Management Strategy for the RDCO is a very basic strategy that contains minimal detail on actions required to implement the Growth Strategy

and minimal policy development. There has been a great amount of background work completed on the RDCO Growth Management Strategy, but it seems that all that work has produced very little policy substance. The general growth management policies cover only 6 of the 14 provincial goals under the Regional Growth Strategies legislation. There is a need for more policy development in the areas of:

- maintaining the integrity of a secure and productive resources base;
- protecting environmentally sensitive areas;
- reducing and preventing air, land and water pollution;
- adequate inventories of suitable land and resources for future settlement;
- protecting the quality and quantity of ground water and surface water;
- preserving, creating and linking urban and rural open space including parks and recreation areas;
- planning for energy supply and promoting efficient use, conservation, and alternative forms of energy.

To the RDCO's credit, the Growth Management Strategy is still in its infancy. Their growth management co-ordinator, Leah Hartley, is currently working on discussion papers and implementation agreements between all affected municipalities that will most likely produce stronger policy development in line with more of the provincial goals.

The RDCO Growth Management Strategy contains much less information on growth strategising than does the RDN GMP. The RDN GMP offers more in the way of policy development. The RDN has defined policy and guidelines for each of the eight goals relating to growth management in the region. The

RDN GMP has managed to cover 11 of the 14 provincial goals in the Regional Growth Strategy legislation.

The TNRD has developed their Regional Growth Strategy further than the RDCO Growth Management Strategy. The TNRD Regional Growth Strategy contains 9 regional goals relating to growth strategising in the region. These 9 goals are consistent with the 14 provincial goals in the Regional Growth Strategies legislation. The TNRD Regional Growth Strategy also contains policies that commit the affected parties to a course of action towards meeting their regional goals and all the provincial goals. These policies offer clear direction for decision-making for elected officials and promote sustainable development in the region.

The development of the TNRD Regional Growth Strategy was not as elaborate or complex as the RDN case and it involved substantially different dynamics. Both regions developed specific regional goals to work towards. However, the TNRD Regional Growth Strategy has done a better job of meeting the provincial goals and it offers a more progressive strategy for achieving a sustainable future.

4.4 CONCLUSION

The RDCO and the TNRD Regional Growth Strategies were not developed as land use plans, as was the case in the RDN. Both of these Regional Growth Strategies have been developed using less technical information than the RDN case, but offer a very broad regional focus on general aspects related to growth. The RDCO had a very elaborate programming agenda, but the adopted Growth Management Strategy includes very few goals or policies that explicitly relate to the provincial goals under the Regional Growth Strategies legislation or sustainable development. Out of the three growth management initiatives examined in this study the TNRD case offers the best example for growth strategising under a prescribed sustainable development framework because it has developed goals and policies that are the most consistent with the provincial goals.

CHAPTER 5

A NEW VISION FOR RURAL REGION GROWTH STRATEGISING: FOR QUALITATIVE IMPROVEMENT AND AGAINST QUANTITATIVE EXPANSION

5.0 INTRODUCTION

The RDN case represents an extensive programming effort that could possibly be translated to a rural/non-metropolitan region in BC. The question is whether the programming behind the RDN Growth Management Plan can be translated to fit a rural context, and if so, how this could be accomplished?

This chapter explains how the RDN growth management programming could be reworked to fit the general rural context in BC, more particularly the Regional District of East Kootenay. It also offers a programming proposal for rural/non-metropolitan regions in B.C that are actively looking to initiate a growth strategy.

5.1 RURAL COMMUNITIES

Rural, in the context of this practicum, means open space or sparsely-populated areas as well as villages and small towns. Traditionally, rural settlement has tended to follow a grid pattern that was practical and economical for the early 1900s (Arendt et al 1994). In many rural areas in Canada and the United States, this development scenario persisted and zoning became local government's primary tool for physical or land use planning. Zoning was, and still is, seen as creating separate and internally

homogenous zoning districts within a land base, for allocating land uses.

Many rural residents feel that having zoning in place is more important than continuing established traditions of township development in rural areas (that arguably produced interesting and livable communities) (Arendt et al 1994).

Zoning has segregated land uses, whereas traditional towns tended to be more diverse, with a richer mixture of land uses. The distinguishing features of a traditional small town or rural area included a certain compactness with downtown centres with mixed land uses, gathering places, public buildings and open space or parks. The residential neighborhoods were close to the centre and sometimes the lots abutted commercial land uses. These communities were pedestrian-friendly and any growth occurred incrementally, outward from the core. Arguably, traditional rural living increased the likelihood of a broader range of community relationships and friendships because of the increased sense of mutual responsibility and support among neighbors, and informal outdoor interactions.

Currently, rural communities seem to be facing a seamless web of sprawling development, that is effectively supported or encouraged by many local planning systems. This trend has also been supported by developers, realtors, lawyers, engineers and those who have accepted the suburban or exurban approach to rural growth (sometimes these interests are collectively referred to as a local or regional 'growth machine').

Rural planning in many such communities has failed to recognize that existing regulations have done an insufficient job of connecting community visions to development decisions. The general consensus in rural communities seems to revolve around growing in a graceful manner, that is consistent with the traditional character of the community, so that new development fits in harmoniously and does little to erode the natural capital of the area. Rural 'planning' has focused more on standard 'zoning', which depicts certain zones on the basis of activity, rather than on the basis of its actual attributes. It often has no performance-based standards built into it and there is little, or in some circumstances, no, evaluation or judgement needed to administer change proposals in a rural area.

There are many components to rural region growth management strategising, such as topography, natural environment, history, culture, and political decision-making. The misconception around rural planning in the last few decades seems to be that planners and local government officials could only apply a general zoning standard to plan for future development. All this seems to have done is needlessly erode the special qualities of rural communities while introducing suburbanization or ex-urbanization into the rural culture. This is true for the Regional District of East Kootenay because zoning has been used as the primary planning tool to regulate population growth and quantitative expansion of the built environment in the region.

At one time, the traditional view was to equate growth with success in rural communities. However, times and attitudes seem to be changing, as the benefits of growth have been minimal and in some cases negative (Fodor 1999). The so-called “stunning discovery”, which identified that growth does not necessarily bring about certain desired ends, or arrest certain undesired trends, has made people aware that continuing on a growth path could actually lead to an increased number of people living in poverty, and an increasing gap between the rich and poor (Zovanyi 1998: 5). Pure rural areas are quite different from urban areas. Zoning has done little to protect the traditional identities of rural communities and there is a need for better planning techniques that will allow for a co-ordinated effort by local governments towards combating the negative effects of continued growth.

5.2 THE RURAL DEVELOPMENT PLANNING CHALLENGE IN THE EAST KOOTENAY REGION OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

In British Columbia, rural communities have generally developed under conventional zoning bylaws. They have been more zoned than planned. Some areas have adopted community plans, but where they exist they are basically advisory, and in most cases are quite out-of-date in terms of being able to adequately deal with current challenges.

British Columbia had the fastest growing population of any province or territory in Canada between 1991 and 1996 with a 13.5 percent overall increase (B.C Ministry of Municipal Affairs [a], July 1997). This population growth has affected many rural regions throughout BC and has transformed their physical, cultural, and traditional character. The rural / urban split in population growth in British Columbia from 1999 to 2000 was an overall municipal increase of 0.8% and an overall rural increase of 4.3% (B.C Statistics 2000). This explains the need for growth strategising in the more rural regions of BC.

The Regional District of East Kootenay (RDEK) is a rural regional district that is presently experiencing high growth rates. In 1991, the population of the RDEK was approximately 52,368; by 1996 the population of this region increased 7.6% to 56,366 persons (Census Canada 1996). From 1996 to 2000 the population of the RDEK increased 6.1% to 62,283 (BC Statistics 2000). The population has increased by 13.7% (9,915) over a nine-year period (BC Statistics 2000).

This trend is expected to continue in the future, with abundant recreational and retirement options available to people. The annual BC Statistics population estimates confirm that in 1999 and 2000, the RDEK was estimated to have been the second fastest growing regional district in the Province. This is just the permanent population and does not include the

seasonal population. Growth was reported in every municipality in the RDEK in 2000. This has not happened since the 1980s. The Village of Radium Hot Springs was estimated to have been the second fastest growing municipality in the Province (Table 9).

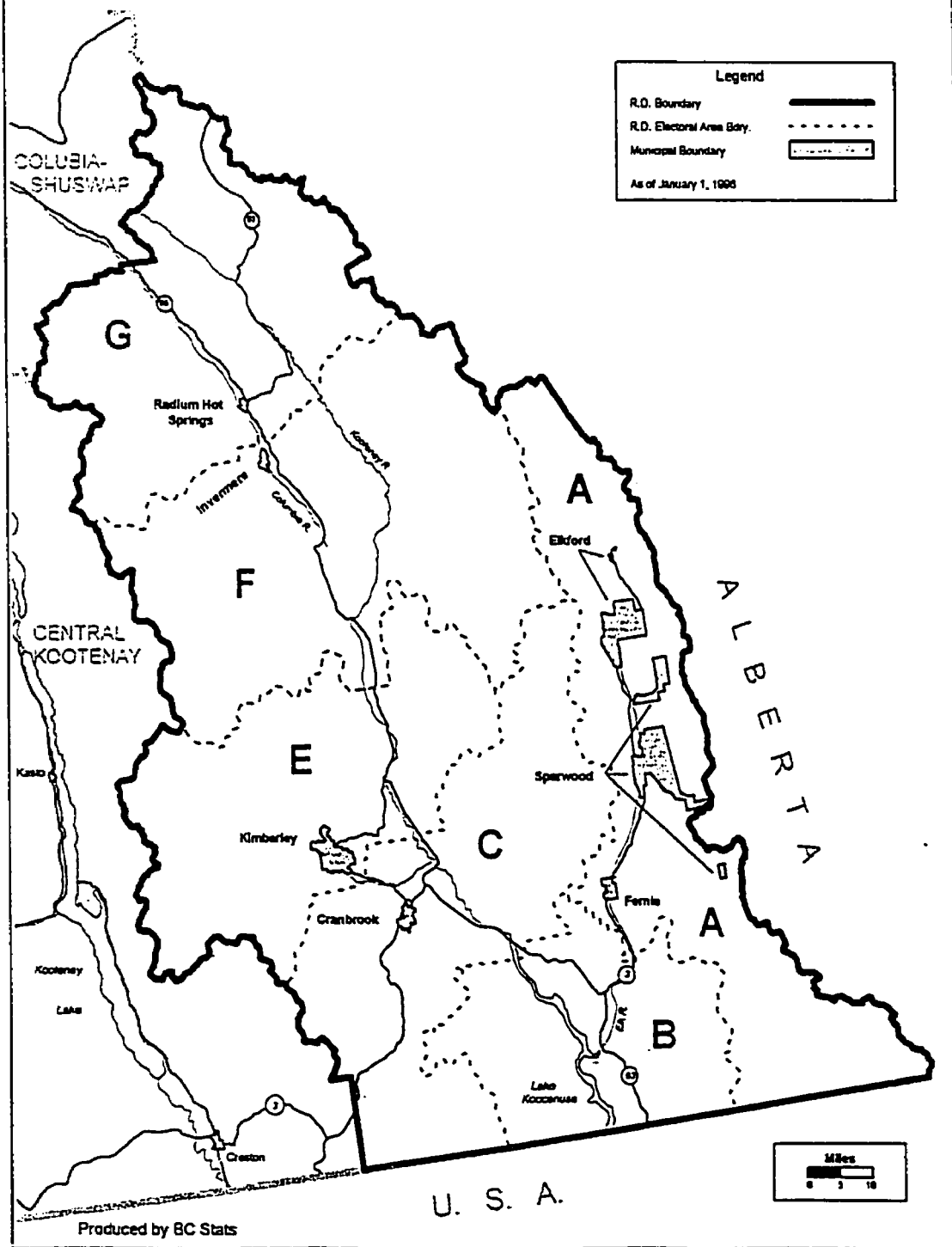
Table 9
RDEK 2000 POPULATION STATISTICS

Area	Population	% Change (1999-2000)
RDEK	62,283	1.9
Cranbrook	19,874	0.4
Elkford	2,866	2.2
Fernie	5,272	1.4
Invermere	2,952	0.2
Kimberley	6,976	0.9
Radium Hot Springs	651	7.6
Sparwood	4,167	0.1

(BC Statistics 2000)

Presently, the RDEK is witnessing an unprecedented transformation of the landscape with an expanding built environment. Urbanization of many rural areas is taking place, continuing the march of low-density, auto-dependent, development patterns, leading to the loss of natural landscapes. Raw rural land is being subdivided into smaller building lots where the natural contours are ignored (or at least altered from their natural state), roads are paved, foundations are poured and houses are constructed. Commercial development in rural areas is slowly following this housing trend in the region. The quantitative increase in the rural communities of the region continues, with virtually no chance of this land base ever being restored to its natural state.

Regional District of East Kootenay



The RDEK plays a very important role in the development pattern described above. It controls the administration of zoning codes, building permits, and other land use regulations for the Electoral Areas in the region. It also controls the investment into the public service infrastructure that is required by development. The RDEK seems to have taken a conservative stance towards planning for development in the region; it supports the status quo by simply projecting the current patterns of development into the future. The status quo approach in the RDEK continues to accommodate population growth and the quantitative expansion of the built environment with little actual planning to acknowledge the fundamental finiteness of land, air, water or biological diversity.

The RDEK staff has identified that they are not adequately planning for growth in the region (Whetham 2001). However, the RDEK Board has adopted policy through a Regional Board resolution (not by bylaw) to direct all new development or growth to or near existing settlement areas in the region (Ibid.). This policy is strictly advisory and may be overlooked by the elected officials on the Regional Board. The basic policies adopted by the RDEK Board have been consistently used as guidelines for making decisions regarding growth in the region (Ibid.). So far the policies have managed growth adequately, but there is the opportunity for an elected official to challenge current policy in the RDEK. This opens up the potential for large amounts of land to be consumed for development, or converted to

developable uses in the RDEK, if a majority of the Regional Board is in favour. This development pattern supports dispersal of the population, which has tremendous costs associated with it (Fodor 1999). The dispersal will mean ongoing investments in highways and infrastructure. Other costs are more difficult to calculate, such as higher pollution levels or a loss of biodiversity. This approach to development in the RDEK reflects a general lack of concern for the interests of the broader public, because the wasteful land consumption represents the loss of natural capital upon which future generations will rely heavily. The approach also reflects a commodity-based view of land and life rather than a stewardship perspective, for example.

The RDEK regulates and manages growth mainly through zoning bylaws, advisory policy, official community plans, twenty-year-old official settlement plans and land use or management strategies. The main problem with the zoning bylaws in the RDEK is that there are no performance-based standards built into them. Some areas within the RDEK jurisdiction do not even have a zoning bylaw regulating land use. Zoning has done little to protect the historic identities of rural communities in the RDEK. The RDEK presently has two OCPs that regulate development for two ski resort communities. Consultants hired by the ski resort owners created both of these plans. They basically lay out how the ski resort will be developed with little reference to regional context. The official settlement plans in the RDEK are severely out-of-date and they do not help to manage growth in a way that

benefits the communities they were developed for. The Toby Benches Land Use Strategy deals with a very small area of the RDEK in the vicinity of Invermere and is probably the only remotely progressive planning tool in the region.

5.3 PROGRAMMING FOR A CHANGE AND FOR SUSTAINABILITY IN RURAL BRITISH COLUMBIA

The RDEK clearly needs a new approach to deal with increasing growth pressures. There is a basic need for the development of a regional growth strategy that can support more planning and less zoning. The region cannot continue the present 'administration of zoning' approach to deal with growth, or it will continue to degrade the quality of life and be destructive to the natural environment, and biological diversity in the region.

There is a need for inter-jurisdictional co-operation in the RDEK on issues such as waste management, transportation, economic development and environmental and natural resource protection. The RDEK plans to initiate a regional growth strategy in the next year or two (Whetham 2001). The RDEK believes that it would benefit from the development of a regional growth strategy because it would formalise decision-making on land use in the region (Ibid.). The Regional Board members would have to work co-operatively toward regional goals and it would build on the policy already in place. The RDEK believes that a regional growth strategy represents a challenge, but they do not see these challenges as being insurmountable.

The biggest challenge will be the cost of developing a growth strategy because the RDEK Board is relatively fiscally conservative when it comes to investing in planning for the region (Ibid.). Politically, the RDEK Board would not be open to limiting growth but would be open to establishing urban containment boundaries around existing settlement areas throughout the region (Ibid.).

If the RDEK is going to develop a regional growth strategy the question is how can it use the programming experiences from the RDN case to program a growth strategy initiative of its own that will fit with its circumstances? It may be possible, because there are many programming features used in the RDN case that could benefit the programming of a growth strategy in the RDEK. However, the RDN Growth Management Plan was more of a regional land use plan that included comparatively elaborate programming. This would represent a far too elaborate initiative for the RDEK. Simply on gross population terms, the RDN experience would have to be scaled down by two-thirds, or three-quarters, to roughly equate with the RDEK context. The RDEK would not have the budget to complete all of the technical analyses that were completed for the RDN case. The Board may want to use some of the programming methodology from the RDN experience. However, the focus should be on generating a more general regional growth strategy, rather than a detailed regional land use plan, especially because the RDEK is approximately ten times larger in area than the RDN.

The RDN case experience would definitely have to be adjusted to fit with the RDEK context. The RDN case had an intensive programming and strategy - building element to it, and the RDEK would most likely not follow the same program. There is the chance for the RDEK to use those programming elements that benefited the RDN case, and also the opportunity to go beyond the goals, policies and guidelines included in the RDN Growth Management Plan.

It is absolutely fundamental to clearly appreciate that the RDN programming experience initially began as the development of a regional land use plan (Connelly and Thomas, 2000). As a consequence, the RDN programming experience for their Growth Management Plan was much more elaborate than what the Ministry of Municipal Affairs might now think is required for the programming of a regional growth strategy in some other regions (Hawksworth, 2000). Currently, the province would have a region complete an initial regional issues assessment, with the member municipalities and the province, so that a region focuses its strategising efforts on developing regional goals that all affected parties want to achieve.

At the time that the RDN was programming its Growth Management Plan, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs deliberately refused to direct regional districts in regards to the approach for the development of a regional growth strategy, recognizing the differences between regions (Hawksworth, 2000).

Hawksworth has also stated that the RDN began by doing a substantial amount of technical analysis, and then stepped back to figure out what key issues needed to be focused on. The Growth Strategies Office would tend to characterise the programming experience of the RDN as more elaborate than is likely required in a more rural context (Ibid). The development of a regional growth strategy should not normally be programmed as a comprehensive regional land use plan. There may then be a tendency for a regional district to get more involved in local community land use planning, which may cause fear of regional control of local land use decisions. The RDN programming experience seemed to follow this track, but fortunately pulled away and shifted its focus instead on urban containment boundaries and policies related to future identification of development nodes and urban fringe area management (Ibid).

Neil Connelly stated that if he was to speculate what would have been different if the RDN had simply pursued a regional growth strategy from the start, rather than the development of a regional land use plan, the RDN Growth Management Plan would have been less comprehensive, easier to achieve, and less effective (Connelly and Thomas, 2000). He stated that the elaborate programming of the RDN Growth Management Plan serves the region better and offers a lot more detail (Ibid).

The RDEK could use a simplified approach to programming their growth management strategy in co-operation with member municipalities and provincial agencies that would focus on:

- Developing a regional vision of a desired future;
- Developing a general framework to guide the pattern of development and investment decisions;
- Enhancing communication, co-ordination and collaboration among government agencies;
- Developing policies that promote sustainable development;
- Developing a monitoring and evaluation plan to ensure that future land use decisions move communities in the region toward a high quality of life;
- Developing under a sustainable development framework.

They could use many of the programming features of the RDN case, but pursue more explicitly sustainable objectives, in an effort to generate a growth strategy that truly operates within a prescribed sustainable development framework.

The RDEK would also have to meet the requirements of the Regional Growth Strategies legislation. The legislation encourages co-operation between local governments and the provincial government. It recognizes that local governments have a vital role to play in developing long-term strategies to manage current and future challenges of growth. Once a regional district decides to adopt a regional growth strategy, it must address the specific topics addressed in Chapter 2, Section 2.3.1, covering a period of at least 20 years.

The legislation is fairly flexible in respect to the fact that a regional growth strategy does not have to be elaborate or lengthy. Individual regions can custom-design their regional growth strategy to fit the local circumstances. The provincial government has still not prescribed a blueprint for a regional growth strategy.

5.4 PROGRAMMING A GROWTH STRATEGY FOR THE EAST KOOTENAY REGION OR OTHER RURAL NON-METROPOLITAN REGIONS IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

As long as the RDEK satisfies the mandatory elements of the Regional Growth Strategies legislation, they can program a growth strategy to fit their circumstances. Cynthia Hawksworth stated that the start-up stage of developing a growth strategy is clearly one of the most important stages (Hawksworth, 2000). The Growth Strategies office is encouraging regional districts who are thinking of developing a growth strategy to investigate carefully the issues to be addressed and consult with municipal and provincial agencies before taking action (Ibid.). One of the most important steps for a successful growth strategy is that all of the local governments in a particular region agree that there is value to the development of a growth strategy. Time also has to be allotted for discussion with all local elected officials before the programming begins (Ibid.).

The provincial government itself has not proceeded with any growth strategy initiatives for rural areas (Hawksworth, 2000). However, changes to Part 26

of the *Local Government Act* emphasize consultation with all parties when a local authority within a region is developing an official community plan. The Province is also removing the “required content” provisions for official community plans (regulations bringing this into effect will be implemented in 2001), and is setting out policy guidelines describing provincial interests in local planning in 2001. All of this new legislation is in line with the Regional Growth Strategies legislation (*Ibid.*).

Programming a growth strategy in the RDEK or any other rural non-metropolitan region in BC would involve a number of steps:

1. The RDEK should complete a systematic review of regional district planning measures for unincorporated areas. This should include the manner in which private property development is regulated and the identification of the scope and purpose for the consideration of ‘whether’ and ‘how’ growth should occur in the region. This will guide policy development in the growth strategy.
2. The RDEK staff working on the development of a growth strategy should consult all the local governments in the regional district to ensure there is a consensus on the value of developing a growth strategy. A regional growth strategy depends on a co-operative approach to addressing critical regional issues. Staff and local

government representatives would set up a budget, which sets the scale and completion date for the growth strategy. The RDN had a \$500,000 budget for a population that is approximately three-times larger than the RDEK and it was for the development of a regional plan, not a regional growth strategy. Therefore, a budget for a regional growth strategy in the RDEK would be approximately \$200,000 and developed over a three-year period. This number would depend on how committed the parties are and whether a consensus can be established on a clear direction for managing growth in the future (Whetham 2001).

3. The RDEK Board would initiate a resolution for the development of a regional growth strategy. The RDEK would have to form an inter-governmental advisory committee (IAC) under Section 867 of the *Local Government Act*. This committee would consist of senior local government staff and senior provincial staff from appropriate ministries and agencies that would be appointed by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs, plus invited others. The IAC would advise the RDEK on the programming and development of its growth strategy and help co-ordinate provincial and local government actions, policies and programs as they relate to the strategy. The IAC would provide advice to regional staff on the development and the implementation of a growth strategy and they would facilitate co-

ordination of related provincial and local government actions, policies and programs. Together, they would undertake a work program to help 'scope' the programming needs and develop 'terms of reference' for the regional growth strategy.

4. Once a consensus has been reached, the RDEK, member municipalities, surrounding jurisdictions and provincial agencies will have reviewed what issues are most significant for the region. The RDEK can draw from the RDN programming experience and create a community advisory group that would develop a public consultation campaign. This provides for early and ongoing consultation with residents, affected local governments, First Nations, and provincial and federal agencies and authorities. This would include focus group meetings, publications, surveys and public workshops throughout the region, to educate regional residents and identify regional issues that are most significant, so that these issues can be prioritized during the latter programming stages of the growth strategy. All secondary issues could be addressed during implementation of the strategy.
5. The RDEK could hire consultants to develop key technical reports that would be utilized, in addition to the public consultation, for the formulation of a vision statement. The vision statement describes a

desired future for the RDEK, outlines the desired elements of future communities, and describes important goals that set basic directions for planning, policies and actions. Hiring consultants would probably be necessary in the RDEK because there is insufficient staff resources to develop and resource a growth strategy effort in-house. The technical analysis would not have to be as elaborate as the RDN case, but it should cover housing, transportation, regional district services, land inventory and economic development issues in the region. The RDEK should establish a technical advisory committee to review all of the findings of the technical reports and analysis. The expectation in the RDEK would be that it spend approximately 15% (\$30,000-\$50,000) of the growth strategy budget on technical analysis. This is significantly less than the RDN example because the focus would be on developing a regional growth strategy rather than a plan. This would mean that the budgetary focus in the RDEK would be on generating long-term vision statements, through public consultation and involvement, that focus on key issues that must be managed at the regional scale.

6. The technical findings and public consultation could be used to design a priority list of key regional issues that should be managed under the growth strategy. The RDEK and affected municipalities would be able to commit to a course of action (policy development)

to manage the key regional issues. The course of action should be designed to meet the common social, economic, and environmental objectives in the region, and operate under a sustainable development framework. It also should be designed to reflect a possible future and represent ways of achieving the vision statement generated earlier in the programming.

7. Once a preferred strategy has been established, the RDEK staff could proceed with drafting a growth strategy with the assistance of the IAC. Together they could generate a co-operative strategy (not a land use plan) designed to move towards a sustainable future for the region. The regional growth strategy would provide a framework outlining regional goals, policies and guidelines for achieving the vision statement of the region.
8. The completed growth strategy bylaw would proceed to the RDEK Board for first and second readings.
9. Member municipalities, Electoral Area Directors, provincial agencies, and other public bodies including First Nations, School District Boards and Health Regions should review the growth strategy. It should be subjected to public review and a public hearing. After the public hearing the RDEK staff should summarize

the public comments to determine if any revisions are necessary to the draft strategy. If so, the RDEK may hold another public hearing on the revised strategy.

10. After the public hearing on the growth strategy bylaw and before third reading, the RDEK Board must refer the bylaw to member municipalities and adjacent regional districts for acceptance.
11. Once the RDEK has the approval of the growth strategy from member municipalities and adjacent regional districts it could proceed to a third reading of the growth strategy bylaw, and adoption.
12. When the bylaw has been approved, the RDEK has to program the implementation of the regional growth strategy. The RDEK should enter into implementation agreements with affected municipalities and the provincial government to co-ordinate and set clear directions relating to the implementation of the regional growth strategy. This would establish guidelines that recommend direction and actions to be taken by senior, regional and local governments. It would also aid the development of implementation actions that prioritize, and assign parties for, specific actions, and outline the

major activities that have to be conducted in order to implement the strategy.

13. Much of the responsibility for implementing growth management will fall to local jurisdictions. Every participating municipality in the region is legally required, within two years of the adoption of the regional growth strategy, to develop an OCP that has a regional context statement, which forms a portion of the OCP and sets out the relationship between the regional growth strategy and the OCP. The RDEK would also have to develop OCPs with context statements for all of the Electoral Areas in the region. The Electoral Area OCPs must comply with the policies described in the growth management strategy and should comply with the guidelines to be effective.
14. Implementing a growth strategy in the RDEK would involve amendments to many bylaws, plans, and procedures, and the creation of new incentives and regulatory tools. The manner in which RDEK regulators approach implementation of the strategy and interpret standards and regulations, and the way businesses make development decisions, will all affect the success of regional growth strategising. Some further studies may be needed as the strategy is implemented to support the growth management effort in

the region. The RDEK is required to prepare annual reports of progress towards achieving the goals of the growth strategy, so there must be a monitoring program set up. The RDEK may want to consider the RDN case and develop a growth strategy monitoring program and committee to report annually on progress made towards its regional growth strategy objectives and goals.

15. Participating municipalities and the RDEK would have to collaborate in preparing schedules or general timeframes for completing specific actions, including necessary budget allocations to implement the growth strategy.
16. Although the growth strategy programming is designed to improve co-operation among jurisdictions, differences in opinion may arise in dealing with the complex issues of growth strategising in the RDEK. The RDEK should build a dispute resolution process into their growth strategy, (based on the Growth Strategies Act framework for reaching agreement during the adoption of the growth management strategy).

These steps outline a possible program for the development of a regional growth strategy in a rural/non-metropolitan region in BC. This represents only a single programming option - there certainly are more ways to program

a growth strategy for rural regions. The programming option outlines the limited transferability of the RDN GMP programming experience. It only references the RDN experiences in implementation and collaboration between local governments and other government agencies.

The content of a growth strategy in the RDEK, or any other rural/non-metropolitan regional district, may reflect a sustainable development agenda to varying degrees. The RDEK believes it is very important that the regional growth strategy focuses on sustainable development (Whetham 2001). The vision statement for a rural/non-metropolitan regional district may be to ensure social, environmental, and economic sustainability in the region to promote a better quality of life for the residents. Therefore, the content of a 'basic' or 'base case' strategy should include:

- A strong commitment to achieve the 14 goals set out in Section 849(2) in the *Local Government Act*. These goals relate to the current thinking about sustainable development. A rural region should also strive to meet all the objectives set out by Zovanyi (1998), Fodor (1999) and Beatley and Manning (1997) relating to ecological sustainability and creating sustainable places. If a rural region sets out to accomplish these goals through the development of a growth strategy, it may promote qualitative improvement in rural communities, establish limits to growth (as continuous quantitative

expansion of the built environment) and ultimately preserve the rural character of the region. A regional district may also consider the critiques on the GSA legislation from Lidstone (1996) and Meligrana (2000) and attempt to program a growth strategy that goes beyond the legislated minima.

5.5 SUMMARY

My experience in planning for rural communities and regions leads me to believe that these communities prefer to grow in a graceful manner, where development is in keeping with the traditional rural character. However, there are rural areas in BC that are losing their traditional character through the rapid expansion of the built environment. Traditional planning methods such as zoning have done little to connect rural community visions to development decision. Sprawling development is eroding the special qualities of rural communities and regions. There is a need for better planning methods to be introduced into rural regions. These could find an impetus in a well-developed regional growth strategy.

The RDN experience of programming their Growth Management Plan is rich, but it is also very elaborate in comparison with most rural region contexts. It would have to be scaled down by at least two-thirds to fit the RDEK context. The RDEK would generate a strategy instead of a plan and attempt much less technical analysis than the RDN case. The programming option

identified in this chapter exemplifies the limited transferability of the RDN example to rural/non-metropolitan regions in BC. This is significant because the provincial government in BC has not proceeded with any provincially-mandated growth strategy initiatives for rural areas.

The RDEK may benefit from evaluating the RDCO and TNRD precedents because they offer more of a rural approach to growth strategising. They also were developed as co-operative regional strategies rather than regional land use plans. The RDEK may want to use these case studies to structure the development of a regional growth strategy, but work on developing stronger policy that works towards a vision of sustainable development. In particular, the RDEK should consider the TNRD case because it is a region that shares similar land use characteristics and has developed stronger policy relating to sustainable development.

The RDEK has planned for growth using official community plans (majority being out-dated), zoning bylaws, land use strategies (that cover a very small portion on the region) and policies developed through Regional Board resolution. These planning tools have generally been used by the Regional Board as guidelines to direct growth to existing settlement areas in the region. However, these tools need to be updated and they should all be working towards a regional vision and goals under a regional growth strategy.

If the RDEK, or a rural regional district in BC, explicitly chooses to program a growth strategy under a sustainable development framework, the strategy should contain a number of policies and guidelines that strive to achieve and/or go beyond all of the fourteen goals set out in the Regional Growth Strategies legislation. Policy development should also strive to meet all the objectives set out by Zovanyi (1998), Fodor (1999) and Beatley and Manning (1997) relating to ecological sustainability and creating sustainable places. This effort may significantly advance long-term planning for sustainable development in the region. Critiques of the Regional Growth Strategies legislation have offered alternative ways for achieving improved growth strategies. A rural regional district may choose to go beyond the legislated minima by including new concepts and objectives into their growth strategy. Chapter 6 examines this further and identifies possible candidate policy for regional districts that decide to develop a regional growth strategy under a prescribed sustainable development framework.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS AND FURTHER RESEARCH NEEDS

6.0 CONCLUSIONS

The main objective of this research in practical terms was to inform how a particular Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) project might be generally strategised, and specifically programmed in the current context of a rural regional district in British Columbia. In its formative stage, the research was designed to generate outcomes that would have immediate relevance to planners, regional district boards, and the provincial government (Growth Strategies Office) in British Columbia. This objective led to the choice of a practicum framework for this work (rather than a thesis format).

There are three major outcomes of this study. The first relates to a determination of how growth management and sustainable development might be reconciled in practice. The second major outcome comprises a set of objectives that would advance long-term planning for explicitly sustainable development in the Regional District of Nanaimo. The third major outcome is a modified growth strategy program outline, for growth strategising in the more rural/non-metropolitan regional districts in British Columbia.

6.1 MANAGING GROWTH FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The first outcome is significant to the intended audience of this research because it has identified the operational measures of growth management

and sustainable development. There has been little co-ordination between the two themes and the relationship between the two themes is a topic that has not been explored greatly in a rural context. The interest in conducting this study was to determine how growth management and sustainable development could be reconciled and merged into a single agenda to produce a growth strategy, for a rural regional district, that is grounded in a sustainable development framework.

According to Zovanyi (1998), the planning profession has done little to overcome the obstacles to securing a sustainable future for communities. The planning profession plays a critical role in promoting dialogue about sustainability, and in developing public policy solutions that ultimately promote sustainability. Planners must enhance their efforts to point out unsustainable development and deficient conventional planning policy. They must strive to help create alternative visions for future development. For example, planners could play a role in generating interest in the local community and formulate sustainability advocacy groups that may help in reshaping the existing political agenda.

Zovanyi's (1998) three operational measures, of what he would define as ecologically sustainable growth management, can be used as a framework to organise and prioritise the policy recommendations offered by Fodor (1999) and Beatley and Manning (1997). This evaluation informed the development

of a policy framework that could be used as an option for promoting ecologically-sustainable growth management.

Policies for regional growth strategy developed under an ecologically sustainable development framework include:

- 1) Create a long-term vision with a common purpose;
 - 2) Keep urban footprint as small as possible and limit the environmental impacts of development;
 - 3) Limit consumption of and protect the renewability of natural resources;
 - 4) Preserve open space, farmland, forests, natural, recreational, scenic, historic and cultural assets;
 - 5) Inter-jurisdictional strategic planning on regional issues;
 - 6) Reverse the degradation already done by past development decisions;
 - 7) Provide economic opportunity without compromising the quality of the natural environment;
 - 8) Educating residents of their moral obligation to enhance quality of life and to have them consider future generations;
 - 9) Recognize the physical limits to growth in a region where the population and expansion of the built environment must be kept in balance with the complex environmental support system;
 - 10) Acknowledge the full environmental, social, and economic costs of growth and development in a region;
 - 11) Plan for pedestrian mobility and minimize automobile dependence;
 - 12) Provide adequate, affordable and appropriate housing.
- A regional growth strategy developed under this framework should have a monitoring program that uses indicators and benchmarks to evaluate successful implementation.

The main obstacle that stands in the way of achieving a vision of ecologically sustainable development in a region is uncertainty as to whether the governments and regional residents will embrace the change. The inertia in the process of cultural and political change seems to be a large hurdle to

overcome; it does little to reconcile growth management and sustainable development.

The research has identified that growth management and sustainable development may be reconcilable in practice if growth management strategies adopt ecologically-sustainable development as their guiding principle for the management effort. Regional districts should strategise on creating policy to emphasize development, in the sense of qualitative improvement rather than quantitative expansion.

Members of the planning profession are key players in the development of communities. They can influence this development process through policies, which address growth concerns in communities. The profession of planning has the ability to influence development policy to significantly improve long-term planning for sustainable development. The benefits of long-term planning for (ecologically) sustainable development should be further investigated. It will likely be discovered that the major tools used by the profession could be modified and more effectively employed in a recast view of growth strategising.

6.2 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND THE GROWTH STRATEGIES LEGISLATION IN BC

The province of BC has not defined sustainable development, nor used the term in the Regional Growth Strategies legislation, because it is felt that the term is too general and means different things to different people (Hawksworth, 2000). The Province has instead used a precise purpose statement and developed goals that imply sustainability in regional growth strategy development.

The study has concluded that most growth strategies in BC have, arguably, included little effort to moderate a pro-growth (with growth defined as population increase and quantitative expansion of the built environment) stance, or to explicitly adopt any form of ecological sustainability as the primary guiding principle. Growth management initiatives have, at best, endorsed dynamically-balanced growth where the plans or strategies aim to confer equal legitimacy on the objectives of growth as quantitative expansion and environmental protection. Growth management initiatives, for the most part, have not accepted the idea of stopping or slowing growth, nor acknowledged an emphasis on development as qualitative improvement. Growth management and sustainable development are by their definitions contradictory to one another unless the 'growth' being managed and accommodated is reframed as 'qualitative improvement', or as in the 'growth' of sustainability positioning from a technological to an ecological perspective.

Growth management initiatives that continue to accommodate quantitative expansion (growth) of a regional built environment without qualitative improvement (development) may by their very nature continually erode the economic, social and environmental conditions of communities in a region.

The policy framework for a regional growth strategy developed under an ecologically sustainable development framework can be used to evaluate the fourteen provincial goals in terms of advancing ecological sustainable development in BC. The fourteen goals in the regional growth strategies legislation have covered:

- Creating a long-term vision with a regional growth strategy covering a period of at least 20 years.
- Keeping the urban footprint as small as possible with the goal of avoiding sprawl, but this goal is based on access to adequate facilities. Therefore, if the facilities are provided a community can continue to grow and expand.
- Limiting consumption of energy supply and protecting natural resources.
- Preservation of open space, farmland, forests, natural, recreational, historic and cultural assets.
- Providing economic opportunities. However, the province bases this on economic development that supports the unique character of a community and does not make any provisions that the economic development must not compromise the quality of the natural environment.
- Minimizing automobile dependence and encouraging pedestrian mobility.
- Providing adequate, affordable and appropriate housing.

The growth strategies legislation sets the standard for sustainable development in BC. It identifies a purpose and fourteen goals that a region

should work towards, but does not mandate compliance. This legislation is still in its infancy and there may be room for improvement. The fourteen goals outlined in the provincial growth strategies legislation have covered seven of the twelve policies offered for developing a regional growth strategy under an ecologically-sustainable policy framework. There are five areas that could be included as appropriate candidate goals in the Regional Growth Strategies legislation:

1. Inter-jurisdictional strategic planning on regional issues. This is implied in the growth strategies legislation, but it is not included in the fourteen goals.
2. Reverse the degradation already done by past development decisions. There is not a goal to promote a strong restorative and regenerative effort to improve communities in a region.
3. Educating residents with good information on how to enhance the quality of life in a region and to produce an informed public to help make good decisions regarding land use, which will benefit future generations.
4. Recognising that there are physical and practical limits to growth. The population size, resource consumption, land use, and pollution levels must be in balance with the environmental support system (Fodor 1999).
5. Acknowledging the full environmental, social and economic costs of growth and development in a region.

In BC the main challenge appears to be to generate growth strategies that move away from a reliance on the dysfunctional regulatory planning systems of the past and instead help to positively develop better communities. If the BC government truly wants to promote sustainable development, it will work towards improving the fourteen goals outlined in the Regional Growth Strategies legislation and legislate compliance towards meeting these goals.

6.3 SEEKING SUSTAINABILITY EXPLICITLY: THE REGIONAL DISTRICT OF NANAIMO

The second major outcome of this research should particularly benefit the Regional District of Nanaimo, and other regions that share similarities with this case. The RDN program for growth strategising has been critiqued with a view to identifying objectives that would significantly advance long-term planning for sustainable development.

The provincial government recognized the RDN GMP by regulation as being a growth strategy (given that it had not followed all the legislatively required steps and content). The programming of the RDN Growth Management Plan was very elaborate. The move towards a growth strategy did not occur until very late in the development of the Plan. This move was not followed by a precise shift or reworking of the Plan, but rather seemed to be a gradual recognition that something more (or less) was needed than a land use plan.

Even though the RDN started its growth management initiative before the Regional Growth Strategies legislation was adopted in BC, the programming and content of the Plan has addressed, and is consistent with, 11 of the 14 goals outlined in the legislation (the only exceptions being: the housing requirement; stewardship of cultural and heritage sites and planning for energy supply). The RDN Board has also committed to completing numerous special studies that focus on ways to maximize the benefits of the Growth Management Plan. These studies could possibly structure

amendments to the Plan that may promote more explicitly sustainable development in the future. The RDN should be recognized for the progressive programming and planning choices made through the development of the Growth Management Plan in relation to urban containment, the extensive consultation effort and the unprecedented level of collaboration between local and provincial government.

However, the RDN may want to enhance their growth management planning efforts by introducing a more developed sustainable development framework in future strategising. The RDN GMP does not contest continued accommodation of population growth, and contains little in the way of policy to explicitly promote development as qualitative improvement. The policy framework for a regional growth strategy developed under an ecologically sustainable development framework can also be used to evaluate the eight goals of the RDN GMP in terms of advancing ecologically sustainable development in that region. The eight goals in the RDN GMP have covered:

- A long-term vision to improve the management of growth in the region.
- Urban containment and limiting the environmental impacts of development by directing development into designated nodes and through the development of Urban Containment Boundaries. However, the Urban Containment Boundaries are subject to expansion every five years and every three years in the City of Nanaimo jurisdiction.
- Preserving open space, farmland, forests.
- Limit consumption and the protection of natural resources.
- Minimize automobile dependence and emphasize pedestrian and transit mobility.

- Providing economic opportunity.
- Inter-jurisdictional co-operation.

The RDN experienced an immense growth increase in the early 1990s, but at present the region is not experiencing the same growth pressures. This may represent an opportunity for the RDN to adopt a new focus for growth strategising that operates under more of an ecologically sustainable development framework. This new focus would build on the current policies and objectives of the Growth Management Plan, but also include:

1. Developing an operational definition of sustainable development.
2. Developing new goals relating to (ecologically) sustainable development in the Growth Management Plan.
3. Recognizing the physical limits to growth in the region, where the population and the expansion of the built environment is in balance with the complex environmental support system.
4. Reverse the degradation already attributable by past development decisions.
5. Providing adequate, affordable and appropriate housing
6. Protecting natural, cultural, recreational, scenic and heritage sites.
7. Educating residents with better information of their moral obligation to enhance the quality of life and to have them consider future generations.
8. Acknowledge the full environmental, social, and economic costs of growth and development.
9. Planning for efficient resource use.
10. More effort on protecting undeveloped land from urban expansion.

The focus of the GMP is on how to accommodate continued growth and it has not attempted to deal with whether growth should occur at all in all or parts of the region. The key desire in the RDN was to produce a land use

plan that identifies how growth will be managed, rather than a regional growth strategy that works toward a vision of an acceptable rate of growth that can be sustained. The RDN GMP does not encourage continued quantitative expansion of its built environment, but it can be argued that it does little to discourage it through urban containment boundaries that can be continuously amended with the Regional Board approval. The RDN has accepted that there are limits to growth, but chose not to include policy relating to this fact in the Growth Management Plan.

Zovanyi (1998) and Fodor (1999) would argue that the RDN GMP has managed to maintain a pro-growth legacy that works against the concept of ecologically sustainable development. They would argue that accepting limits to growth – in at least some areas, with respect to at least some types of proposals - is necessary to allow a region to maintain its present qualities and make improvements to enhance the quality of life. A non-growing or slow-growing community has the potential to provide good jobs, adequate housing, ample open space, permanent rural lands, safer neighbourhoods, pedestrian friendly streets and environmental protection because it is not being overrun by growth in quantitative expansion terms. This allows a region to shift its focus from always trying to plan for accommodating continuing growth, to planning for the region to become a better place for people to live, work and play.

It is difficult to evaluate if the current growth-accommodating agenda will be successful or will prove problematic in the RDN, because the Growth Management Plan is still in its infancy. The Plan involves some progressive steps toward managing future change, and articulates a vision of a seemingly desirable future. Time will tell if the growth-accommodating agenda will achieve, or block, the realization of elements of the regional vision.

6.4 A 'MADE IN THE REGIONAL DISTRICT OF EAST KOOTENAY' REGIONAL GROWTH STRATEGY

The third major outcome of this research is a consideration of the transferability of the RDN growth management program to the context of the Regional District of East Kootenay in British Columbia. The research identified that the RDN Growth Management Plan offered a limited exemplary template for other regions around BC, mainly because it was developed as a land use plan and not a regional strategy. This included extensive programming and technical data collection and analysis, which would represent a far too elaborate programming template for rural regional districts to employ, especially the Regional District of East Kootenay. However, the RDEK may want to incorporate some of the programming features included in the RDN case, such as urban containment, public consultation and collaborative planning between member municipalities and senior government agencies.

In population terms, the RDN experience in growth management planning would have to be scaled down by approximately two-thirds, to attain the range of the RDEK context. The RDN spent approximately \$500,000 on the development of their GMP, half of which was paid for by the provincial government. This translated into roughly \$2.00 per person over the five years. In the RDEK with a population of approximately 60,000 the cost for a growth strategy, based on a \$2.00 per person per year limit, would translate into a \$300,000 budget if the development of the growth strategy took five years to complete. It is safer to assume that the RDEK would incorporate a much simpler growth strategising framework that would take less time and cost significantly less to complete. If the RDEK incorporated a simplified approach to developing a growth strategy it could possibly complete the project in three years with a budget of \$200,000 - \$250,000, half of which should be paid for by the provincial government. Bob Whetham (2001) agrees with this projection, if everything goes smoothly with the development of a regional growth strategy. However, he stated that this budget expectation could be a low estimate if there were any problems (Whetham 2001). The budget for the development of a growth strategy in the RDEK will be dependent on how committed the affected parties are to the project (Ibid.).

The analysis of this study has informed a programming proposal for growth strategising in the Regional District of East Kootenay, while anticipating a more simplified approach than that taken in the RDN. The RDEK would have

to satisfy all the requirements in the Regional Growth Strategies legislation but it could incorporate a simplified approach to programming the growth management strategy, focusing on creating a regional vision of a desired future under a prescribed (ecologically) sustainable development framework. The RDEK would benefit from focusing on the programming of the TNRD Growth Management Strategy. The development of the TNRD Regional Growth Strategy was not as elaborate as the RDN case. The TNRD Regional Growth Strategy has done a better job of meeting the provincial goals and it offers a more progressive strategy for achieving a sustainable future.

This may benefit the provincial government (Growth Strategies Office) because they have not proceeded with any legislated growth strategy initiatives for rural regions in BC. However, the existing growth strategies legislation is flexible enough to address rural content.

The RDEK believes that it would benefit from the development of a regional growth strategy because it would help formalise decision-making in the region (Whetham 2001). It would also help to improve the co-operation between municipalities and the RDEK and allow better decision-making towards regional goals (Ibid.). The RDEK believes that it is very important to have a growth strategy developed under a sustainable development framework (Ibid.). The RDEK has the opportunity to develop its own vision

of a desired future, tailored to the circumstances and priorities of the various communities in the region. It is necessary for the RDEK to include certain principles that will help the region navigate towards sustainability including:

1. **Integration:** Integrate development and conservation, recognizing the effects of development decisions on the environment, and the effects of conservation decisions on development.
2. **Cooperation:** Work cooperatively, using processes such as public/private sector partnerships, inter-agency collaboration and community involvement to support decision-making processes that are integrated, informed and open.
3. **Managing change:** Anticipate and manage change towards desired ends, rather than just reacting to change. With these ends in mind, be adaptive, flexible and responsive in on-going decision-making.
4. **Autonomy and responsibility:** Grant communities a greater degree of autonomy while recognizing community responsibility to the region and beyond.
5. **Self-reliance:** Enable communities to be self-reliant and reduce their dependency on external services, resources and economies.
6. **Economic health:** Promote long-term economic stability by enhancing the community's capabilities and stimulating economic diversification.
7. **Renewable resources:** Ensure that the use of renewable resources permits the continued use of these resources indefinitely and protects ecosystem productivity.
8. **Non-renewable resources:** Hold to a minimum the depletion of non-renewable resources, and wherever possible, replace them with renewable resources.
9. **Community culture:** Build a community culture which helps to meet individual needs and leads people to be drawn together by, and committed to the character and identity of, the place where they live.
10. **Individual needs:** Promote a healthy and dynamic community life.
11. **Equity:** Aim for a fair and equitable distribution of the benefits and the costs of resource use, environmental protection and social programs within and between communities.
12. **Life support systems:** Protect life support systems, meaning the ecological processes that shape climate, cleanse air and water, regulate water flow, recycle essential elements, create and regenerate soil, and enable ecosystems to renew themselves. This

requires us to limit our impact on ecosystems so as to stay within their carrying capacity.

13. **Biodiversity:** Conserve biodiversity, ensuring that the natural variety of life forms and habitats in the environment is maintained.
14. **Learning:** Encourage life-long learning for community members and take a learning approach in decision-making. Look at plans, programs and projects as experiments that provide the opportunity for learning and improvement through adaptation over time.
15. **Attitudes and values:** Promote attitudes, values and actions that support sustainability, including any lifestyle changes.

(Georgia Basin Initiative et al. 1995: 6)

These principles can be of practical use to the RDEK and act as some reference points towards creating a regional growth strategy that operates under a sustainable development framework. This is an agenda that was not followed in the RDN case, but it is one that protects and respects the natural attributes of a region to ensure long-term health and sustainability of open spaces and natural resources. It also promotes prosperous, healthy, inspirational and uplifting 'sustainable places' throughout a region. It supports culture, tourism, and recreation and promotes a transportation system that is energy-efficient, affordable, accessible, and convenient. Under this agenda growth management decisions would respect neighbouring communities and reflect a commitment to both economic and environmental sustainability.

Using the Zovanyi (1998) based policy framework for ecological sustainability, the fifteen principles offered above, and the book Rural Environmental Planning for Sustainable Communities, it is possible to identify appropriate candidate policy for a rural regional district growth strategy, developed under a sustainable development framework:

- Keep the urban footprints of the existing settlement areas in the regional district as small as possible using Urban Containment Boundaries.
- Recognize the effects of development decisions on the environment, and the effect of conservation decisions on development.
- Preserve open space, farmland, forests, natural, recreational, scenic, historic, and cultural assets in the regional district.
- Provide and promote opportunities for inter-jurisdictional strategic planning on key regional issues.
- Make efforts towards reversing the degradation already associated with past poor development decisions.
- Promote long-term economic stability without compromising the quality of the natural environment. Enhance the community's capabilities, stimulate economic diversification, and reduce their dependency on external services, resources and economies.
- Pursue authority for regional subdivision approval to facilitate local planning and development decision-making.
- Minimize the depletion of non-renewable resources and ensure that the use of renewable resources permits the continued use of these resources indefinitely.
- Protect life-support systems, limit impact on ecosystems and conserve biodiversity in the region.
- Encourage learning for community members and provide the opportunity for learning that supports sustainability or improvement through adaptation over time.
- Recognize the physical limits to growth in the region, where the population and expansion of the built environment must be kept in balance with the assimilative capacity of a complex environmental support system.
- Acknowledge the full environmental, social, and economic costs of growth (as quantitative expansion) and development in the region.
- Plan for pedestrian mobility and minimize automobile dependence.
- Provide and promote adequate, affordable and appropriate housing in the region.
- Promote a healthy, dynamic and safe community life.
- Aim for a fair and equitable distribution of the benefits and the costs of development within and between communities in the region.

These policies could benefit the development of a regional growth strategy in the RDEK. Many of these policies go beyond the legislation minima and provide reference points toward sustainability. The RDEK would have to have the commitment from member municipalities and electoral area directors to successfully implement these policies. Official community plans would have to be developed or amended to ensure compliance with these policies.

The RDEK would also have to develop a monitoring program that uses indicators or benchmarks to evaluate the successful implementation of a regional growth strategy. Examples of indicators to track the progress of a regional growth strategy may include:

- Percentage of land zoned for residential, commercial and industrial use.
- Percentage of natural areas, open space, farmland, forest land, and recreational land.
- Percentage of new housing built within a certain proximity of specific urban amenities (demonstrating concentration of development).
- Residential densities determined by zoning – dwelling units per hectare.
- Lands not yet in urban development but zoned for higher density development.
- Length of average vehicle commutes.
- Rate of loss of natural habitats.
- Changes in plant and animal populations.
- Change in ground water levels.
- Change in reservoir levels.
- Percentage of natural areas with protected status.
- Level of wastewater treatment.

- Percentage of households with water meters.
- Litres of water used per capita.
- Portion of land sites rehabilitated.
- (Georgia Basin Initiative et al. 1995: 61, 73)

These indicators only represent a few examples that could be included in a monitoring program for a regional growth strategy in a rural region of BC. The RDEK could use indicators as benchmark measures for achieving set targets for a certain time period. These targets are based on the goals developed through the regional growth strategy for measuring progress towards the regional vision.

The development of indicators and benchmarks are essential ingredients to maintain an annual progress report for a regional growth strategy. The RDEK could build on the indicators mentioned above and create a monitoring program that is more suited to its particular regional goals.

6.5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The study has focused on the relationship between sustainable development and growth strategising with a particular focus on the BC context.

Sustainable development is an ambiguous concept, but the study has identified that not having a precise definition or a clear understanding of the term should not be a reason for a local or provincial government to delay action. Government should promote planning processes that will lead to the

development of a better understanding of what it means. Bridging the concepts of regional growth strategising and sustainable development may influence many rewards for a region such as balancing the positive and the negative impacts of conservation and development, developing long-term economic stability, and maintaining a healthy environment. There are many ways to develop regional growth strategies and no 'one' way is the right way, since all regions have different experiences and expectations.

All of the regional districts that have been included in this study have their own way of dealing with growth. The only similarity between all of them was the fact that none were ready to accept limits to growth. They were all focused on 'how' to direct growth in a way that will benefit the region, and the communities within that region. Even in discussions with the RDEK, which is proposing to develop a regional growth strategy in the near future, the emphasis will be on directing growth, not limiting it (Whetham 2001).

The Regional Growth Strategies legislation has significantly helped regions throughout BC to manage growth, but has not legislated or counselled regions to recognize the physical limits to growth. This is an area that demands more attention because every region should be able to identify their carrying capacity (the capacity of interrelated communities of plants and animals to withstand impacts of human use without dangerous deterioration) (Georgia Basin Initiative et al 1995: 6). One example of a creative and

innovative way to manage limits to growth is Sidney's Residential Development and Building Quota System.

"In May, 1994, the Town of Sidney adopted a number of policies to control growth, at the centre of which is a quota of 2% population growth per year, based on the number of building permits issued for new residential units. The quota will be implemented by the limited issuance of development variance permits and limited re-zoning – two areas in which Council has discretion under the Local Government Act. Although Council still has to consider all development applications on their own merits under the Act, any that take growth over the 2% limit in a given year will be rejected or tabled until the following year. Any year that the 2% quota is exceeded, as it has been in the short term due to development within existing zones, the amount by which it is exceeded will be deducted from the quota for the next year" (Georgia Basin Initiative et al 1995: 57).

Mitigating the negative impacts of growth and promoting sustainable development in a region may call for some change in expectations of what exactly is required for a good lifestyle (i.e. the current practice of favouring large residential lots). Developing growth scenarios under a sustainable development framework should be tested through public consultation to establish which scenario works best for a particular region.

Recognizing the true costs and benefits of actions and initiatives is one of the hallmarks of sustainability (Georgia Basin Initiative et al 1995: 68). More attention is needed to force regional districts to acknowledge the full environmental, social, and economic costs of growth. There is also a need to integrate transportation planning with regional growth strategies to emphasize compact development and minimize automobile dependence. There should be policy development at either the provincial or local

government level that ensures adequate, affordable and appropriate housing in every region of BC.

The study has focused on a framework of doing development differently in rural regions in BC. Local government should shift attention towards adopting a regional growth strategy that is developed under a sustainable development framework because it will be using its resources effectively to promote economically, socially and ecologically sustainable activities. The challenges relating to this shift are not insurmountable, given that public opinion polls have revealed that the environment is a major concern of Canadians (Hodge 1996: 372). In BC, the Regional Growth Strategies legislation can be used as a guiding tool to create this shift, but there should be an effort to go beyond the current legislation minima and to strive for innovative policy to ensure sustainable development.

APPENDIX (A)

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Project

A Master in City Planning Practicum on Programming A Growth Management Strategy in British Columbia: An Evaluative Case Study of the Regional District of Nanaimo Experience.

Time of the interview:

Date:

Place:

Interviewer:

Interviewee:

Position of the interviewee:

Background

I am a graduate student in the City Planning Program at the University of Manitoba. I presently work as a Planning Technician for the Regional District of East Kootenay. I am researching the programming of growth management strategies in BC, with particular reference to the Regional District of Nanaimo, Thompson–Nicola Regional District and the Regional District of Central Okanagan. I am interested in the programming experiences to evaluate:

1. the resources that are necessary to complete a regional growth strategy;
2. whether there was a programming effort towards sustainable development;
3. the transferability of programming techniques for the development of a regional growth strategy in the Regional District of East Kootenay;
4. a new vision for rural region growth strategising in BC.

Please answer all of the questions and save as a word document. Please e-mail your responses back to Sean Roy at: sroy@rdek.bc.ca.

Questions:

1. What was/is your involvement with growth management planning or strategising?

2. What would you approximate to be the budget for developing a Regional Growth Strategy in your region?
3. What input did the your government have in the programming of the Regional Growth Management Plan/Strategy?
4. What were the greatest factors/issues that persuaded your government to initiate or participate in the development of the Regional Growth Plan/Strategy?

5. What growth management precedents were researched while developing your Regional Growth Management Plan/Strategy and what did your government draw from this research?
6. Were there any conflicting issues through the development of the Regional Growth Management Plan/Strategy?
7. What are the greatest qualities that the development of the Regional Growth Management Plan/Strategy brings to your government jurisdiction?

8. How was the Context Statement developed in your Official Community Plan?
9. How is the Context Statement working towards the implementation of the Regional Growth Management Plan/Strategy?
10. Was there a positive reaction to the development of the Regional Growth Management Plan/Strategy by area residents and Elected Officials?

11. If there was anything you could change about the development or the content of the Regional Growth Management Plan/Strategy, what would it be?

12. What did you make of the RDN experience/approach to growth management?

13. Was sustainable development a key issue in the development of the Regional Growth Management Plan/Strategy?

14. Will the Regional Growth Management Plan/Strategy limit growth in the region?

[Thank you for participating in this interview. Your time and answers are greatly appreciated.]

OVERVIEW OF THE GROWTH MANAGEMENT PLAN PREPARATION PROCESS

1. CHRONOLOGY

During the summer of 1993, the staff of the RDN prepared terms of reference for a growth management program. In November, 1993, a consultant was hired to begin work on the project. The following major steps were taken as part of the *Regional Challenge and Choice* growth management strategy.

1993

October	Request for proposals issued
November	Consultant team hired to review growth management issues faced by the RDN and to prepare a work program and budget for a growth management strategy

1994

January	Issues Report and Preliminary Design completed
March	Ministry of Municipal Affairs approves cost share funding for growth management strategy
June	Newspaper announcement of project start-up, requests for comments
May-July	Initial stakeholder list prepared; key public, business, and First Nations groups contacted
June	Community Advisory Group and Technical Advisory Committee constituted and convened
July-December	Technical studies undertaken
September	Focus groups convened to identify issues and priorities
October	Release of <i>Backgrounders</i> summarizing project process
October-November	Public survey of growth management issues and priorities
October-December	Workshops on mobility and energy efficient communities, Complete Communities conference

1995

January	Values and goals visioning workshop
March	Formulation and release of Scenario Options
April	Brochure mailed to every household

1995 (continued)

April-May	Public open houses on Vision Statement and Growth Management Scenarios
June-July	Elected representatives' review of scenarios
July-August	Preparation of Preferred Scenario, Draft Plan
October	Board gives draft plan bylaw first 2 readings
September-October	Municipal, senior government review of Draft Plan
October-November	Public review of Draft Plan
November-December	Public hearings on plan
December	Summarization of public comments
1996	
January-February	Revision of Draft Plan
February	Board approval of Revised Plan
March	Minister of Municipal Affairs brings RDN Growth Management Plan under jurisdiction of the <i>Growth Strategies Act</i>
February-May	Municipal and public review of Revised Plan
March-May	Round Table reviews major growth issues, issues report
May	Public Hearings on the Revised Plan
June	Regional Board refers Plan to municipalities and adjacent Regional Districts for approval
January 1997	Board adoption of Plan; implementation begins

APPENDIX (C)

Survey Questionnaire

REGIONAL DISTRICT OF NANAIMO

Regional Challenge and Choice:

A Growth Management Strategy

This questionnaire is part of a process designed to obtain your views about issues related to growth in the Regional District of Nanaimo. The Region stretches along the coast from the Cedar area in the south, through Nanaimo, Parksville and Qualicum Beach to Bowser/Deep Bay in the north. It includes the Coombs/Hilliers area and Gabriola Island.

The RDN wants your input to assist us to make important decisions that will influence the rate, location and form of growth in our region.

Please answer all questions. If you wish to comment on any questions or explain your answers, please use the space in the margins or on the back cover. Your comments will be read and taken into consideration.

1. How long have you lived in the Regional District of Nanaimo? (Please circle one number)

22.7% LESS THAN 5 YEARS
 19.8% 5 - 10 YEARS
 42.7% MORE THAN 10 YEARS
 10.4% ALL MY LIFE
 4.4% no response

2. Please rate the importance of each of the following factors to you when choosing a place to live? (Please circle a number from 1 to 5)

	Not Important At All			Very Important	
	1	2	3	4	5
a) ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE				4.02	
b) ACCESS TO SHOPPING				3.54	
c) AFFORDABLE HOUSING				4.07	
d) ARTS AND CULTURAL OPPORTUNITIES			2.95		
e) EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES				3.63	
f) ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY				4.40	
g) GOOD PLACE TO RETIRE				3.94	
h) NATURAL SETTING/BEAUTY				4.41	
i) OUTDOOR RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES				3.85	
j) SAFE, SECURE PLACE TO LIVE					4.74
k) SENSE OF COMMUNITY				3.98	
OTHER (Please specify)					
l) _____	(see data tables for written responses)				
m) _____					

3. How concerned are you about the current situation in the Region regarding each of the following issues? (Please circle one number for each issue)

	Not Concerned At All			Very Concerned	
	1	2	3	4	5
a) CHANGING CHARACTER OF YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD				3.81	
b) CRIME					4.52
c) DECLINING WATER QUALITY AND SUPPLY				4.19	
d) LOSS OF AGRICULTURAL LAND				3.67	
e) LOSS OF NATURAL ENVIRONMENT				4.22	
f) POLLUTION				4.36	
g) PUBLIC TRANSIT			3.11		
h) RISING LAND AND HOUSING PRICES				3.81	
i) SEWAGE TREATMENT				4.10	
j) TRAFFIC CONGESTION				4.25	
k) URBAN SPRAWL				3.97	
OTHER (Please specify)					
l) _____	(see data tables for written responses)				
m) _____					

4. How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements? (Please circle one number for each item)

	Strongly Disagree			Strongly Agree	
	1	2	3	4	5
a) I AM OPTIMISTIC THAT PROPER MANAGEMENT OF GROWTH CAN BE ACHIEVED UNDER OUR PRESENT SYSTEM OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT			2.70		
b) THE CURRENT RATE OF GROWTH IN OUR REGION IS TOO HIGH AND NEEDS TO BE REDUCED				3.56	
c) WE SHOULD PROTECT UNDEVELOPED AREAS IN THE REGION BY ALLOWING NEW DEVELOPMENT ONLY IN ALREADY BUILT UP AREAS				3.66	
d) GOVERNMENT SHOULD RELAX DEVELOPMENT CONTROLS AND LET PUBLIC DEMAND FOR HOUSING AND SERVICES DETERMINE GROWTH IN THE REGION		2.35			
e) WE SHOULD DEAL WITH TRAFFIC CONGESTION BY BUILDING MORE ROADS			3.08		
f) MORE CONTROL OVER THE RATE, LOCATION AND TYPE OF DEVELOPMENT IS NEEDED TO PROTECT THE GOOD THINGS WE HAVE IN THIS REGION				4.24	

5. Which of the following items most need to be improved in the Regional District of Nanaimo in the next ten years? (Please read the whole list and then circle up to a maximum of three numbers)

7.6%	AIR QUALITY
59.1%	CRIME AND PERSONAL SAFETY
23.1%	JOB OPPORTUNITIES
17.4%	AFFORDABLE HOUSING
20.2%	PARKS AND NATURAL AREAS
13.5%	PRESERVATION OF AGRICULTURAL LAND
11.4%	PUBLIC TRANSIT
10.5%	RECREATIONAL FACILITIES
16.7%	RECYCLING AND GARBAGE DISPOSAL
23.3%	SEWAGE TREATMENT
43.3%	TRAFFIC CONGESTION
35.4%	WATER SUPPLY AND QUALITY

OTHER (Please specify)

13. _____ (see data tables for written responses)

14. _____

6. Do you like your neighbourhood just the way it is? (Please circle one number)

71.0% YES
22.9% NO
6.1% no response

If YES, please go to Question #7

If NO, what is the most important change that is needed to improve your neighbourhood? (List here and use back cover or separate sheet if needed)

(See data tables for written responses)

7. Managing growth in this region could mean making "tradeoffs" - getting something at the expense of something else. (Please circle one number for each item)

WOULD YOU ACCEPT.....?

	Yes	No	Don't Care
a) MULTI-FAMILY HOUSING IN MY NEIGHBOURHOOD IN ORDER TO REDUCE URBAN SPRAWL	24.9%	60.2%	10.3%
b) LIMITING OR STOPPING GROWTH EVEN IF IT AFFECTS MY PROPERTY VALUES	50.1%	29.7%	14.7%
c) SHIFTING EMPHASIS FROM HIGHWAYS AND ROADS TO WALKING, CYCLING, TRANSIT OR THE TRAIN	50.4%	34.4%	10.8%
d) ACCOMMODATING FUTURE GROWTH ON VACANT RURAL LAND RATHER THAN EXISTING DEVELOPED AREAS	27.9%	58.5%	8.2%
e) PROTECTING ALL AGRICULTURAL LAND EVEN IF IT LIMITS AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT	55.6%	31.6%	8.8%

If you do not agree with, or wish to comment on these or other tradeoffs, please do so here or on the back cover.

(See data tables for written responses)

Now we would like to get some information from you to ensure we have a good cross section of residents in our sample.

8. What is your age group? (Please circle one number)

9.2%	19 - 34
32.0%	35 - 49
25.3%	50 - 64
31.6%	65 OR OVER
1.9%	no response

9. What is your sex? (Please circle one number)

31.4%	FEMALE
66.2%	MALE
2.3%	no response

10. Which of the following phrases best describes your home? (Please circle one number)

6.3%	APARTMENT BLOCK (MORE THAN TWO STORIES HIGH)
6.9%	CONNECTED HOUSING (ONE OR TWO LEVELS)
76.4%	SINGLE FAMILY DETACHED HOUSE
6.7%	TRAILER OR MOBILE HOME
3.7%	OTHER or no response

11. How would you describe your neighbourhood? (Please circle one number)

7.1%	DOWNTOWN CORE
54.1%	SUBURBAN NEIGHBOURHOOD
37.4%	RURAL OR SEMI RURAL AREA
1.4%	no response

12. Which of the following phrases best describes your household? (Please circle one number)

24.0%	SINGLE ADULT(S) WITH NO DEPENDENT CHILDREN
4.3%	SINGLE PARENT WITH DEPENDENT CHILDREN
26.4%	COUPLE WITH DEPENDENT CHILDREN
42.9%	COUPLE WITH NO DEPENDENT CHILDREN
2.4%	OTHER or no response

13. Which of the following phrases best describes your employment situation? (Please circle one number)

0.6%	STUDENT
42.3%	RETIRED
3.5%	UNPAID WORK IN THE HOME OR COMMUNITY
2.9%	UNEMPLOYED
40.4%	EMPLOYED FULL-TIME
9.9%	EMPLOYED PART-TIME
1.4%	no response

Is there anything else you would like to tell us about growth in your area? If so, please use the space below and insert additional sheets if necessary. (see data tables for written responses)

Please put the completed questionnaire in the stamped return envelope and drop it in the mail by Friday.

We Value Your Opinion

Thank You For Your Input!

(Westland Resource Group [d] 1995:2-7)

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