

**Analyzing the influence of Regional Planning efforts
in creating Compact Developments:
A case study of the Metrotown regional town centre**

**by
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Abstract

The proponents of Metropolitan governance believe it to offer the most feasible means to managing growth and developments that transcend jurisdictional boundaries. Regional governance structures, infused with the new regionalism approach of treating the region as a hub for economic development, are characteristic of modern regional planning efforts. My study examines the role of regional planning, particularly regarding the role of Metro Vancouver's Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) of 2011 in the increase of density for the Metrotown regional town centre. My research also examines the effects of the compacted urban development form, which the RGS promotes, on the Metrotown regional town centre. Regional planning under the new regionalist approach advocates for governance rather than government structures for planning development across the region. The implications of such an approach for the direction that the City of Burnaby takes towards compact development at Metrotown are examined in this paper. My research examines the effects of an intra-metropolitan transfer of policies (between regional government and the municipalities) rather than the well-known inter-metropolitan transfer process between cities in different countries. Policy mobilities enable regional planning to influence the direction of municipal planning through cooperation, consolidation, and policy sharing amongst municipalities. Increasing density through compact developments around transit lines are intended to combat sprawl, preserve agricultural lands, and reduce pollution through reduced vehicle use and travel. This urban core densification idea can also be viewed as a double-edged sword with negative consequences and benefits. My research highlights how and why regional governance on its own may not be sufficient for handling issues such as housing (un)affordability that may result from urban core densification. This paper calls for support from higher levels of government to ensure that the regional governance of Metro Vancouver can handle the costs associated with using high-density to support housing affordability and manage regional growth.

Keywords: metropolitan governance; compact urban developments; policy mobilities; increased density; new regionalism; economic development

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List of Acronyms

CT	Census Tracts
FTDAs	Frequent Transit Development Areas
GVRD	Greater Vancouver Regional District
GVTA	Greater Vancouver Transportation Authority
LMRPB	Lower Mainland Regional Planning Board
LRSP	Livable Region Strategic Plan
OCP	Official Community Plan
RCS	Regional Context Statement.
RGS	Regional Growth Strategy

Chapter 1. Introduction

Regional planning under the metropolitan governance approach advocates for a bottom-up relationship between the municipalities and regional authority. The metropolitan governance approach, sometimes described as new regionalism, encourages planning and cooperation amongst municipalities to effectively manage the regional growth that transcends jurisdictional boundaries. Rather than creating new structures of top-down authority, the metropolitan governance approach, contains several tools and mechanisms that are used to ensure that the growth and development within the urban core of the city is aligned to the desires of the wider region. The key concern which is central to this research is understanding how the municipalities balance the aspirations of the region with the local goals and capacity of the city involved.

My research is focused on understanding the role of regional planning for town centres through the Metrotown case. I will focus a great deal of attention to the 2011 Regional Growth Strategy as the most recent and ongoing regional planning effort. But my research also considers the roles and possible influences that previous regional plans may have had on my study area. The Metrotown regional city centre is one of the seven regional city centres found within the Metro Vancouver region (Metro Vancouver 2020). Metro Vancouver consists of 21 municipalities, with elected officials from each municipality forming the federated governance body for regional planning on various issues across the Metro Vancouver region (Metro Vancouver 2021).

The City of Burnaby, one of the municipalities under the Metro Vancouver regional body, takes part in the regional efforts towards the growth of the entire region. One of the goals of the Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) is to “create a compact urban area” especially around transit networks to improve livability, accessibility, and sustainability conditions for the entire Metro Vancouver region (Metro Vancouver 2013). Part of my research focuses on answering the question of how the city negotiates between the goals of the region and that of the municipality itself. Namely, this research analyzes the role of regional planning through the RGS in influencing planning developments for the City of Burnaby and the associated implications that come with it.

Metro Vancouver is expected to develop to accommodate over 35,000 residents per year, and regional city centres such as Metrotown are expected to accommodate

most of this growth (population) (Metro Vancouver 2013). Therefore, creating compact urban developments as promoted by the RGS is a way to support this growth while combatting other issues such as urban sprawl. Urban sprawl corresponds to scattered developments that are characterized by the loss or reduction of fertile ecosystems, and longer commute times (Artmann et al. 2019). The idea of 'compactness' as an urban form although largely involving densifying an urban core can both be a regional and local characteristic as local areas are embedded in regional spaces. Compact developments are characterized by high-density and land use diversity that promote central area revitalization, mixed land use development, and concentrated developments around transit (Pradhan 2017). The move to support compact development almost always arises in opposition to sprawl, and high density is the most common feature of this urban development form.

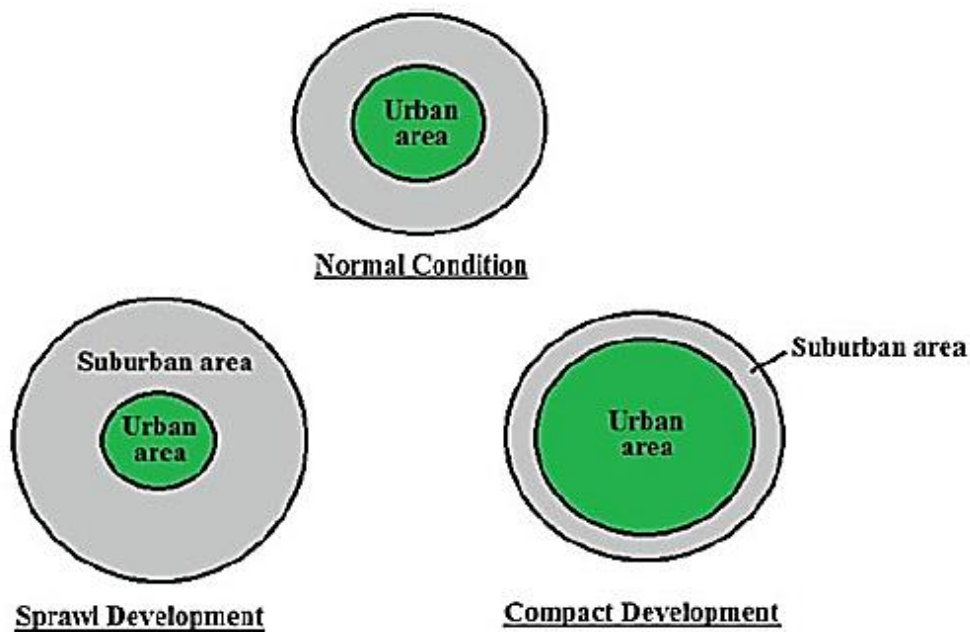


Figure 1.1. Visual of the character of sprawl vs compact development
Credits from (Pradhan 2017, p.43)

The Figure 1.1 above illustrates how compact development utilizes an urban area by increasing its size. Sprawl developments on the other hand limit the size of urban areas. Compact development is often associated with higher density while sprawl development is associated with low density. Moreover, the 'normal condition' as depicted in the image is arbitrary with no means to ascertain its measure and is only for illustrative purposes. The three main concepts of the compact urban area are: urban density, urban

intensity, and land use diversity (Pradhan 2017). The urban density involves indicators such as population, job, and building densities. The urban intensity involves intensification of mixed land use developments and brownfield revitalization (Pradhan 2017). Lastly, land use diversity analyzes the different land-use categories and zoning in a mixed land-use area such as commercial, residential, and industrial uses (Pradhan 2017).

My research helps explain the ways in which regional efforts to manage growth and development exert their influence on the planning direction of the City of Burnaby for Metrotown. Since the 1970s, and under the town centres program, Metrotown has been considered a place to accommodate the growth and development coming into the Greater Vancouver region (ACA's Design Associates 1989). Increasing density as described by the RGS in 2011 is to take a "compact urban development form" (Metro Vancouver 2013). My research examines the context of 'compact development' forms based on how it is expressed and how it functions in both regional and municipal plans. And the lack of attention to the consequences of increased density on regional town centres is what my research primarily uncovers.

My research is significant to Urban Studies because one of the greatest challenges for cities and regions alike is managing growth which includes increased numbers of dwellings, jobs, and residents. Most of the world's population is congregated in cities, this raises the ubiquitous dilemma of how this growth should be managed. According to Savitch and Vogel (2000), local policy can influence metropolitan areas due to the relationship that exists between regional problems and local organization. Using their insight, I argue that the success of regional planning is dependent on having the organization of the local area in alignment with the regional body. Regional problems occur across multiple scales and often require some level of coordination and consensus building at the local scale (Wheeler 2002). The proponents of new regionalism apply an approach of consolidation and collaboration for handling issues that transcend a city's boundaries.

But new regionalism is not without flaws, and my research examines the strengths and weaknesses of the regionalist approach to planning using the social justice and sustainability frame for uncovering how cities could be affected. Analyzing the sustainable attributes of compact developments mostly focus on securing the

economic interests of the affluent (developers) and some environmental benefits which are debatable (Eric & Roger 2018). According to the authors, compact developments advocating for more density reveals power relations of who can attract the most interest at the expense of the less favoured social groups. Therefore, my research questions the capacity of using increased density to address equity concerns while planning developments. Equity examines the 'fairness and justice of the distribution of the impacts (benefits and costs) of an action' (Guimarães et.al 2020 p.3). Moreover, Metro Vancouver commits to 'increasing the supply of modest cost housing for owners and renters and eliminate homelessness in the region' (Metro Vancouver 2010 p. 24). This would indicate a commitment to an equitable supply of housing for everyone.

My research is important because I believe the findings are not only applicable to the City of Burnaby but would help inform other similar suburban neighbourhoods within the cities that make up the Lower mainland of the Greater Vancouver region and even beyond. The economic implications behind the support for compact urban development form makes my research very relevant. But bear in mind that my research does not intend to measure these economic outcomes. Instead, my research demonstrates the role that the push for economic development could play towards fostering collaboration in planning amongst municipalities within a region. My research helps explain the directions cities take towards urban developments and what influences and informs such decisions.

Finally, my research provides insights on whether regional planning influences the development directions of a city's urban form, how it does this, if at all, and what the implications are for the resulting city. Understanding how cities deal with local goals for growth and development while at the same time trying to align with regional expectations is of great importance to the field of Urban Studies. My research creates awareness of some possible challenges and implications while attempting to balance regional strategic goals with municipal local goals.

Metrotown, as viewed in Figures 1.2 and 1.3 below has experienced densification particularly in the increase in the number of high-rise buildings between 1985 and 2016. Using 1985 as a baseline of comparison is appropriate given that the Expo line opening in 1986 could be seen as an enabler to urban development in the area. Although the influence might have been experienced much earlier through the former Ford auto plant

redevelopment in the area. The manner and approaches on how and why such increase in the density that ensued throughout this 30-year period and beyond is further explored in this paper.

The main question guiding this research is how has regional planning, particularly the most recent Regional Growth Strategy in 2011 influenced the creation and increase of density at the Metrotown regional town centre? What are the possible implications of such urban development form in the study area since the RGS was initiated? What are the costs associated with using density as a measure of the successfulness of developments? How does the City of Burnaby align its local goals around compact development urban form with the strategies and goals for the Metro Vancouver region? Besides, is regional planning sufficient for addressing the issues that result from increased density despite the governance approach of inter-municipal and city-regional collaboration?

One of the methods used in this study is to examine and analyse regional plans starting with the first plan for the Lower Mainland region in the early 50s. The idea here is to understand the rationale behind the emergence of regional town centres and the significant role regional planning has played in shaping subsequent plans. This historical analysis process also creates an outline of the timeline of events concerning regional planning from as far back as the 1950s, when the first regional planning board as well as the first regional plan were instituted (LMRPB 1952). Significant events such as updates to official regional plans, changes in municipal governments, and updated municipal plans were analyzed. Census data which I also analyzed in this research is key to visualizing the changes in various indicators of density. Interviews with the City of Burnaby staff and Metro Vancouver staff provides insights on the perceptions of the relationship between regional and municipal planning.

Analyzing the historical context and journey of regional planning in Metro Vancouver is vital in understanding how regional planning plays a role in influencing municipal planning efforts. According to McCann (2011), highlighting the stories and changes that occur at each stage of a policy is a key component of the mobilities concept. Policy Mobilities are complex, non-straightforward, power-laden processes that are intended to highlight the 'complexities of policy-making' within a place (McCann and Ward 2013, p.9). To the best of my knowledge, my research is the first to use such an

approach in understanding the role that regional planning plays for municipal planning and development. Therefore, this research looks at important events that occurred within the Metro Vancouver region, the City of Burnaby, and Metrotown area from the 1950s to date. Everything that occurs at each stage for regional planning in Metro Vancouver and local planning in the City of Burnaby helps in addressing the questions posed in this research.



Figure 1.2. Urban form of Metrotown in 1985.
Image retrieved from City of Burnaby (2017) p 10



Figure 1.3. Urban form of Metrotown in 2016.

Image retrieved from City of Burnaby (2017) p 11

Regional planning in Metro Vancouver occurs under a collaborative framework between municipalities and the regional authority. This model of governance upon which Metro Vancouver prides itself largely differs from the typical traditional top-to-bottom model of government. The governance approach also represents a reduction in the involvement of the formal state, and “an increase in the collective action of other societal and private institutions” (Healey 2007, p.19). The collective integration of various institutions is vital for addressing issues that concern an entire region and cross municipal boundaries. Metropolitan issues are best addressed through coordination and cooperation between municipalities and regional authorities at all levels (Heinelt and Kubler 2005). It is important to note that the regional planning analyzed in this research operates successfully based on the collective collaboration between the municipalities that form the Metro Vancouver region.

Furthermore, while collaboration is necessary for addressing regional issues, the consequences of compact development which primarily rests on local areas are either ignored or receives less attention. The lack of attention is what this research intends to address. My research also explores the supposed strong link between compact

developments and sustainable developments. Since 2002, Metro Vancouver has infused the concept of sustainability as part of its core techniques for planning, to make the region sustainable for the future (Metro Vancouver 2010). This sustainability framework has within it certain core services, political forums and policies that are integrated as one. So, apart from uncovering how regional planning supports this urban form for the Metrotown area, the consequences of advocating for such a form of development are analyzed under the requirements of a sustainable area.

In this paper I use the governance model and new regionalism concept to demonstrate how Metro Vancouver addresses complex issues that stretch across municipal boundaries. Regional planning in Metro Vancouver is done through processes that build consensus and ensure that goals and strategies are successfully implemented while endeavouring to avoid conflicts. The role of regional planning for municipal town centres supports the economic growth and environmental protection of areas in an urban form that is compact. But such an approach might not be entirely sustainable in the long run for reasons relating to its costs and obscurity of social justice concerns. My research calls for support from higher levels of government to aid regional governance in handling complex issues such as housing affordability.

The next chapter presents my conceptual framework for this research which begins with the literature of regional governance and new regionalism. Here I demonstrate how the governance model under new regionalism enables consensus building for the development of the region and the local areas within. The mobilities framework highlights the importance of tracing both the history of planning and key changes that planning undergoes along the way. The approach to compact development reveals the possibilities of the compact urban form in addressing some aspects of sustainable development. But at the same time and central to this research some key aspects such as the social component are not fully addressed.

Chapter 3 outlines the methods used in answering the questions posed in this research starting with the content analysis of regional planning documents and statements and municipal plans associated with my study area. And then I present an overview of the key informants for the interview phase of this research and how they were recruited. Finally, I analyzed Census data to provide statistical indicators for increased density around Metrotown, the City of Burnaby and Metro Vancouver.

The historical storyline for planning and development in Metro Vancouver and Burnaby posed in Chapter 4 looks at the previous regional plans, and strategic events that contribute to understanding the role of regional planning for municipal town centres. The section particularly highlights the importance of examining the long history of regional planning for understanding its consequences for current planning directions. The chapter ends by providing a prelude to the housing affordability crisis in Metrotown and the consequences for the development of Burnaby.

Chapter 5 looks at the intersection between regional and municipal planning in Metro Vancouver. This process involves examining key documents such as the Regional Context Statement (RCS) that ensures that municipal plans are done in compliance with the strategies of the region. The chapter then looks at the negative outcome associated with increased density that the Metrotown area.

My paper concludes by suggesting a rethink of the strengths of regional planning in addressing complex issues such as equity in providing housing affordability and the capacity of compact developments to be truly sustainable. The research limitations and areas for future research are examined in chapter 6. Finally, I call on higher levels of government (provincial) to take on a greater role than merely supporting the efforts of the region and municipalities in addressing these complex issues.

Chapter 2. Conceptual Framework

My research examines the role that regional planning plays for the municipal direction towards increased densification. The literature on the topic of Metropolitan governance in regional planning helps explain this role, as it provides the appropriate lens for understanding how new regionalism impacts the implementation of plans for Metro Vancouver. The new regionalism approach to planning prioritizes governance rather than government, thereby fostering cooperation amongst municipalities towards growth that oversteps local boundaries. This study highlights the implications of the new regionalist approach to regional planning which advocates for governance on the growth of the Metrotown regional city centre.

My research then explores the topic of policy mobilities, and how this concept is important for understanding the history of regional planning efforts with attention to the details that occur along the way. Policy mobilities also highlight the importance of consensus building among all actors involved in a policy process for successful implementation of a goal or strategy. When municipalities come together to deliberate on regional strategies, knowledge transfer and sharing occurs based on the new regionalist approach to governance. Here, the focus is also on how municipalities deliberate and identify policies that are deemed successful that can be applied towards the goal of fostering growth or managing it.

Finally, this literature review explores the topic of increasing density through compact developments around transit networks for the growth of the town centre. This section of the literature examines the role of urban core densification to create compact developments. My research explores the concerns that compact developments are thought to mainly satisfy economic interests, while being alleged as sustainable. Increasing density for a metropolitan region through compact developments provide visible economic and environmental benefits which could obscure some social justice components. The following literature analyzes the influences of a regional approach towards the densification of the Metrotown regional town centre, and the implications of the resulting compact form of urban development.

2.1. New regionalism and Metropolitan governance

Metropolitan government 'refers to a structure or institutional arrangement for the government of metropolitan areas' (Lefevre 1998, p.10). Whereas 'governments encompass firmly institutionalized and centralized hierarchical political layers, governance in contrast is fluid, flexible and encourages local cooperation' (Heinelt and Kubler 2005, p.161). The previously top-down characteristics of metropolitan governments (old regionalism) led to calls for a new governance model (new regionalism) in the 1990s (Lefevre 1998; & Heinelt and Kübler 2005). The rise of new regionalism was partly in response to the perceived shortcomings and hierarchical organization of metropolitan governments prior to the 1990s. And Savitch and Vogel (2001) argue that new regionalism cannot be understood without differentiating government from governance. According to these authors, government refers to formal hierarchical structures, while governance refers to the informal points of consolidation among jurisdictions. New regionalism focuses on using the 'governance' model rather than 'government' in planning for developments that occur within a region (Plüss 2015; Lefevre 1998; Heinelt and Kübler 2005).

Moreover, Wheeler (2002) argues that new regionalism was developed as a response to the failures of the 20th-century planning, that largely focused on 'placeless sprawl of suburbs' (p. 274). Sprawling involves the movement of people and jobs away from an urban core into the suburbs. Planning in the past failed to address the disorganized way sprawl occurred in the suburbs, hence the introduction of new regionalism to address this inefficiency issue. But new regionalism did not only emerge due to the failures of previous twentieth century planning, but to control population growth that flowed into the suburbs and stretched city boundaries (Wheeler 2002; Savitch and Vogel 2001). The need to manage the influx of population into an urban area is a major characteristic of how new regionalism functions.

Several authors propose that for new regionalism, the region is the birthplace of economic development. (Macleod 2001; Lovering 1999). The economic interest of regions that seek to compete both locally and globally are vested in the new regionalism approach. Further, the region is the fundamental basis for economic and social life and a space for learning-based competitive advantage (Jonas and Pincetl 2006). My research

is not primarily concerned with evaluating economic outcomes of cities but to highlight how and why the study of economic, social, and other implications of supporting increased density is vital. The new regionalism literature helps in understanding how the governance model to regional planning undertaken by Metro Vancouver plays a major role in the decisions that contribute to growth of the municipalities within the region. When asked in an interview about the nature of competition among municipalities within the Metro Vancouver region, the deputy general manager of planning for the City of Burnaby Lee-Ann Garnett explained:

For municipalities you have competition, but in Metropolitan areas where you don't have competition you have a hard time getting jobs and people. You're going to have different cities trying to do things to grab more of the pie in Metro Vancouver. We're so lucky because for many decades we've had a lot of growth we have a lot of people wanting to come here (Burnaby) and we have employers who want to be here too. As for competition, I don't feel that other local governments are fighting each other so much for landing the next Amazon. We're trying to get the next big employer. I don't see that as being a problem for local governments, but I would say that in our region, Vancouver has the biggest downtown, it has the central business district.

According to Garnett, in the Metro Vancouver case, competition between municipalities is not necessarily a bad thing, and is seen as a good means for job provision within the region. Advocates of new regionalism claim that the idea enhances the capacity of metropolitan regions to compete in the global economy (Saavitch and Vogel 2000). The municipalities that make up the Metro Vancouver region including Burnaby, are also involved in local competition with each other to attract people, jobs, and secure affordable housing. With the continuous growth into the Metro Vancouver region, the need to accommodate the incoming population and secure affordable housing creates inevitable local competition as Garnett points out. Moreover, according to a 2012 study by Fraser Institute, municipalities within Metro Vancouver secure most of their revenue from taxation (mostly property taxes which accounts for 96.8% of general taxes) at the rate of 47%, with sale of service and user fees at 33.2%, and developer fees at 9.2% (Lammam, Emes and MacIntyre 2014, p.15). Therefore, the importance of local competition for development which drives property taxes cannot be ruled out among the municipalities seeking to secure the most share of revenue.

Now, even if economic competition is not as glaring between the municipalities within Metro Vancouver, the Greater Vancouver region has the capacity to boost its

trade and movement of goods in a way that makes the Canadian economy grow with the countries along the Asia Pacific (Harcourt and Cameron 2007, p.191). And Harcourt and Cameron (2007) in their book *City Making in Paradise* stated that municipalities within the Greater Vancouver region needed to realize that the competition was not between themselves but with other international cities around the globe. Harcourt and Cameron's argument helps to understand that municipalities should not get carried away by their local competition with one another but realize that their major competitors are external rather than internal. Their argument also provides an additional layer of understanding the rationale behind global competition for cities which goes beyond the drive for local competition argued by Garnett. The similarity between the local and global competition is based on the drive by municipalities to secure people, jobs, and affordable housing for the growth of the economy. And the connection between local and global competition for Garnett's quote above is the capacity that municipalities have to compete in the global economy through new regionalism as asserted by (Saavitch and Vogel 2000).

The important point to note here is that the effects of economic development often go beyond the scale of city and are felt by the region and suburban areas (Arndt et al.2000). With the reality of the ripple effects of economic development to a region, the implications for the city and surrounding area are vital to examine. To this effect, Frisken (2001) calls for provision of the necessary infrastructure needed to attract economic investments or ensuring that there is equity in the distribution of costs and benefits related to economic activity for all municipalities involved. Securing equity as it relates to the distribution of the costs and benefits of economic development is a major goal of my research.

Moreover, authors like Lovering (1999), and PAASI (2003) acknowledge that for new regionalism the economy of a region is vital, and the most appropriate scope for organizing the economies of scale relevant for surviving in the globalized markets. By definition, the new regionalist approach focuses on both the local and regional scale for organizing economic activities. And Sezgin (2018) in his analysis of new regionalism in Turkey ascertains that the institutionalization of new regionalism for Turkey shows that there would always be an importance of the region for global and national economy and politics. According to the author, analysis of the regional policies from 1963 to 2014 revealed the presence of new regionalism in their regional plans. Similarly, Jonas and Pincetl (2006) acknowledge in their paper on the "new civic regionalism" in California

that the economic rather than the social demands get the most attention from this reformed regional agenda. They suggest that the new civic regionalism can be thought of as both a political process and social movement involving, engaging with, and creating new spatial forms of democracy and social capital. It is in this vein that my research explores new regionalism from the lens of concerns involving social equity that go beyond the commonly addressed economic perspective.

Some of the critics of new regionalism such as Lovering (1999), argue that new regionalism has no true paradigm and only functions to explain cases of regional development that are problematic in real world applications. According to Lovering (1999), new regionalism as a concept is one that thrives mainly due to the ability to replicate successful policy implementation in one region spurred on by promising stories that lack the basis for explanation. Although there is no consideration for what constitutes as success in this case, the focus is that policies are replicated elsewhere. Recent research from Sezgin (2018) has agreed with Lovering's critique of new regionalism for its failures to develop a 'rigorous foundational theoretical insight' in the relationship between the economy and politics for the Turkey case (p. 667). According to Lovering, Sezgin, and others, proponents of new regionalism often lack the evidence required to back the claims that new regionalism plays a big role for the economy of a region.

But authors like Orfield (1999) argue that a lack of new regionalism involving consolidation can lead to regional polarization, which carries increased costs, such as higher taxes for businesses, and depletion of the environment due to fragmented land use patterns. The author defines polarization as a situation whereby poverty situates at city core followed by disinvestments and middle-class flight. As majority of the middle-class flee the city core due to decline of high-paying jobs, the businesses suffer due to the lack of a strong wealthy tax base (Orfield 1999). Moreover, the introduction of new regionalist approach to planning encourages civil groups that care about environmental protection and social equity to participate in the governance process (Orfield 1999). According to the author, regional governments create certain political programs for the communities, which these groups then attempt to link their agendas to. Although I acknowledge that the negative impacts of a lack of regionalism as described by Orfield may not actualize in the Metro Vancouver case, the implications may be necessary for other parts of the world. Additionally, Orfield's idea on how the introduction of new

regionalism encourages collaboration among civil groups to promote social equity is vital for my research. Orfield's idea on new regionalism is important for my research because the Metro Vancouver region which my research focuses on encourages collaborations among member municipalities in a manner that is like Orfield's idea on new regionalism.

Furthermore, it is interesting to analyze the Metro Vancouver regional governance case which Sancton (2001) believes is unique for being more American than the Canadian model. The American model of regional governance encourages a strong mobilization of local support prior to legislation from either the federal or provincial authorities (Sancton 2001). This local mobilization is a practice that Sancton (2001) remarks is rarely supported anywhere in Canada except for British Columbia, where local support drives the agenda for any new regionalist legislature. And Orfield's idea of encouraging civil groups to participate in the governance process share a similarity with the American model that supports mobilization of local support which is characteristic of Metro Vancouver. The importance of my research therefore is to highlight the implications of new regionalism for planning cities which includes the merits and demerits.

2.1.1. Understanding Metro Vancouver's Metropolitan Governance Structure and its effect on Municipal levels

Metro Vancouver is the regional body responsible for handling issues that transcends a municipal boundary, and it accomplishes this by coordination amongst municipalities within the region. From Metro Vancouver's days as the Greater Vancouver Regional District (GVRD), it has always relied on local mobilization and support for driving the agenda of new regionalism legislation (Sancton 2001). Under this governance system, municipalities such as Burnaby coordinate with other municipalities within the region and with Metro Vancouver planners in drafting out planning policies and goals. A historical examination of how the Metro Vancouver regional body has transformed over the years since its inception is explored in Chapter 4 of this paper. And Chapter 5 of my research outlines how the whole process of coordination occurs between the municipalities and regional authority. Regional governments are responsible for producing regional plans with which municipalities are expected to conform to (Frissen 2001). According to Sancton (2001) the GVRD board since its creation has faced the most difficult planning issue of trying to organize the roles of

regional districts which have continued to be affected by provincial legislation over time. He further states that:

Since 1995, regional districts have been encouraged by the province to approve regional growth strategies. Consultation with constituent municipalities and other affected parties is mandatory. Prior to formal adoption, all municipalities must agree but, in cases where some or all do not agree, the issues in dispute are sent to binding arbitration. If a regional district does not act at all with respect to a regional growth strategy, then the provincial government has the right to require that one be adopted. (Sancton 2001, p.551)

The provincial government plays a critical role in ensuring that the municipalities collaborate with one another towards implementation of the regional growth strategies. A central question to this research is examining if regional planning through the governance approach is sufficient for addressing equity issues that arise from compact developments. And latter chapters of this research would indicate that the collaborative feature of new regionalism is not enough for addressing social equity issues resulting from increased density. The Canadian provincial governments in the 1990s began to pay closer attention to how municipal governments are organized within the regional scale (Sancton 2001). The provincial government therefore through legislation aids the region in its influence of municipal planning direction.

Metro Vancouver follows a new regionalist path through its governance approach and relations between the municipalities. According to PMV3 with Metro Vancouver:

The regional growth strategy is about a regional scale directing growth to the centers. There's been targets to direct a certain percentage of regional growth over the years and currently the target is about 40% of new growth. Metro Vancouver has been achieving much higher based on our performance monitoring that is being tied to direct growth. And I think that's the impact that the regional growth strategies have had.

The focus of Metro Vancouver is to hit the growth targets in terms of population moving into the urban centres and provision of jobs and housing units for residents. The RGS is a regional planning tool used to ensure that cities are concentrating a massive share of growth within their urban centres. Although my research is only working with the provided evidence from the interview data and not assuming that the link between growth and equity is direct. I acknowledge that the effects of equity can emanate from several other outcomes as well. I conclude from PMV3's comment above, that monitoring the effectiveness of the output growth numbers is the focus rather than the

effects of increased growth to urban centres. But this focus on output is criticized by Heinelt and Kübler (2005) as they argue that new regionalism focuses on increasing the effective outputs of policies rather than the inputs. In other words, the result of the policy (output) should not take priority over the analysis of what goes into making and implementing policies (input). The output of growth here involves increased population, dwellings and jobs that are often used in assessing economic development. Several authors in my research have argued that new regionalism relies on having the region as a hub for economic development. According to Jonas and Pincetl (2006), the collapse of the old industrial activities and the rapid increase of population into the suburbs prompted metropolitan governance to be consolidated and to organize themselves along fiscal lines. Following the collapse of old industry, the goal of metropolitan governance was to manage growth in a financially responsible manner.

While the critique of new regionalism focuses mainly on its over reliance and concern for economic development, the absence of new regionalism may be problematic for areas that lack the regionalist approach to regional planning. It is argued by Orfield (1999) that a reformed agenda for regional governance is required to tackle the effects of socio-economic decline and poverty in both City core and surrounding suburban areas. In his analysis of the Twin Cities and the regional polarization of Minnesota in the 1980s, a stronger regional government was required to tackle issues like sprawl and degradation of the environment. Although this is a worse case scenario example, the goal is to provide a case study for the arguments for and against new regionalism. The focus on the economic development of regions could limit the strengths of new regionalism as an approach to tackle other issues such as environmental sustainability and social justice issues that are not economically inclined. An interview with PMV3 from Metro Vancouver on the importance of incorporating economic development when planning for the region:

I believe that good planning leads to great economic development. When you plan urban centers, and not the urban centers referenced in the RGS but urbanism or urban centers that are of an urban fabric. A commercial drive or a Broadway, or Lonsdale type urban center with a retailer and Main Street; and you build those walkable communities with multiple transportation choices. Those are the foundations to high quality economic development. And oftentimes the economic side gets caught up in the chasing of jobs, rather than in the chasing of good urban places which last for a long time.

Planning, particularly at the regional scale is geared towards having a strong foundation for economic development throughout the region. Some advocates of economic interests and competition believe that the most appropriate level for organizing the governance of an economy is the region (Lovering 1999). But this claim according to Lovering often lacks the appropriate evidence and foundational backings that new regionalists propose. According to the author, in the case of the transformation of the economic landscape of Wales in the mid-1990s, there was so much cognitive bias that aimed at ignoring the most important factor that contributed to the economic development of Wales which was the British state (Lovering 1999). I agree with Lovering's claims that when explaining the relevance of the region for economic development emphasis should focus on verifiable evidence and consideration of other factors that could contribute to the notion. I also acknowledge that there is no perfect governance structure, but the importance of governance can not be overlooked for planning and economic development. My research highlights how the governance model of regional planning in Metro Vancouver displays aspects of new regionalist principles that make the region more economically competitive. The goal is not to measure these economic outcomes but to use the application to understand the influence that economic competition can have for supporting increased density at town centres.

To conclude, the most appropriate level for organizing the governance of an economy is the region due to its capacity to induce policies that monitor the economy, share knowledge, and improve learning (Lovering 1999). The aim is to understand the consequences of having the region as the hub for economic development. Moreover, my research focus is not to agree with the concepts but to state the effects for regional governance. Whether you side with the proponents of new regionalism or the critics, "many regional problems can only be solved by coordinating planning and urban design at regional, municipal, neighborhood, and site scales" (Wheeler 2002, p.275). New regionalism may be a vital approach to solving regional problems due to its capacity to adopt a cooperative governance structure that cuts across various scales. Metropolitan issues according to Wheeler (2002) are complex and often require a multi-dimensional scale of governance which regularly involves sharing and cooperation between actors. The complexity of Metropolitan issues as illustrated above makes new regionalism an appealing concept for regional planning The next section highlights the processes that enable policy sharing, knowledge, and learning to occur both inter-municipally and City-

region wise. The policy mobilities literature examines changes that policies undergo and the associated implications for planning of physical developments.

2.2. Role of policy mobilities

Policy Mobilities are complex, non-straightforward, power-laden processes that are intended to highlight the 'complexities of policy-making' within a place (McCann and Ward 2013, p.9). The Policy Mobilities framework examines the movements of policies and how knowledge sharing processes are conceived as well as the changes policies could undergo along the way. Before the mobilities framework emerged, policy transfer was a frequently and still an often-used term to denote how policies move from one point to another. Policy transfer involves the process through which knowledge about policies developed in one place is used to develop policies in another place (Dolowitz and Marsh 1996). Policy transfer can emerge when a country (or in this case a City-region) feels it has been left behind by its neighbours or competitors (Dolowitz and Marsh 1996, p.349). The urge for a City to compete with the rest of the global world encourages policy transfer to occur.

The use of 'lesson drawing' which relies on 'free choice of political actors' and does not necessarily result in a policy change is preferable to policy transfer which operates in a coercive manner (Dolowitz and Marsh 1996, p.344). In this case, a negative lesson can be learned from and not applied as part of a change in policy. The essence of my research is not to make comparisons between policy transfer and policy mobility, but to highlight why mobilities represent the most appropriate framework for understanding the movement of policies and aid in answering my research questions. The importance of making the distinction between the two models of policy transfer and mobilities is the tendency for the concepts to be used interchangeably which my research would not attempt to do. Policy transfer can be a good starting point in analyzing policies, but it does not tell the entire story (McCann and Ward 2013). Therefore, policy mobilities in my research would be applied by telling the stories, and the lessons learned while policies are in motion. Analyzing the paths that policies travel and what occurs along the way is as important as the policies themselves and the places they impact (McCann and Temenos 2013).

Besides, there is more focus on the “policy transfer agents” and less attention on the policy actors and the processes they undergo to mobilize policies (McCann and Ward 2013, p.6). Policy mobilities concerns itself with understanding everything that occurs along the journey that policies undergo from one place to another, which policy transfer does not do. Also, McCann (2011) argues that policy transfer has narrow typologies that adhere only to one or two scales and assumes that policies are unaffected when they move from one point to another. In contrast to policy transfer, part of understanding the mobilities of policies involves understanding the various ways policies function as they journey from place to place. Therefore, my research makes use of the policy mobilities framework to analyze these movements of policies from place to place especially one that involves multiple scales.

As metropolitan governance in Metro Vancouver occurs in a multi-scale setting involving the municipalities, local citizens, and regional authority, it is vital to understand how this consensual model influences the approach to urban developments. The advocates of the mobilities framework treat scales where policies are developed as fluid and dynamic as ‘scales (local, national, regional, and global) are social constructs that facilitate the production of economic and political interests’ (McCann and Ward 2013, p.5). This idea is important as my research is interested in uncovering whose interests (regional vs municipal) are being served and how these interests are balanced when in pursuit of development. Each policy serves a particular interest more than others, therefore the study of policy mobilities must also study ‘politics and ‘power’ (McCann and Temenos 2013, p.350). Presumably there might be interest that penetrate multiple scales such as from property developers. My research does not study multi-level governance in the sense that I have not explicitly researched the role of higher levels of government.

Moreover, McCann (2011), has argued on the role of policy mobilities and the global circuits of public knowledge in providing the pathways for the transfer of policy models which can then shape urbanism and urbanization. Analyzing the transfer of knowledge that emanates from policies could uncover whose interests are best served by mobilizing policy in a place. Mobilities are not only concerned with the movement of policies across cities but the transformations that occur ‘from the physical to the imaginative, the topographical, the topological, the absolute, and the relational’ (Clarke 2012, p.5). The mobilities framework examined in my research analyzes the changes

that occur when policies move from the region to the City and vice versa. The major concern is about how the regional body encourages the mobilization of policies that enable sharing and cooperation between municipalities under the Metropolitan governance structure of Metro Vancouver. To this effect mobilities present the best possible lens to analyze what happens to policies when they move from one point to another, as it has been argued that policies are shaped and undergo changes as they move (McCann 2011; Peck 2011). The Interview with PMV3 from Metro Vancouver on the level on collaboration between municipalities based on the RGS framework revealed that:

I'm sure neighboring municipalities talk to each other and collaborate. But however, to note that each municipality has their own political context, and that those contexts may not align with their neighboring municipalities. The township of Langley might have a different opinion on something that's happening in Surrey. And that is what it is. The region on the other hand certainly collaborates with local government and provides convening opportunities. Metro Vancouver spent a lot of time bringing them together so that we could convene as a group and engage with one another at the staff level.

The planning authorities especially at the regional level have always maintained that success of implemented strategies and plans relies on the abilities of all involved to cooperate with each other. The regional body then provides the means that enables collaboration between the region and the local government. Of course, there is no guarantee that the actors would collaborate or that the process would occur without series of deliberations and conflicts. If policy actors in core cities perceive that their influence with other municipalities for new regionalism is low, then they would not be committed to enhancing cooperation with neighbouring cities (Plüss 2015). For instance, in September 1995 the City of Richmond, Surrey, and Township of Langley declined to accept the LRSP proposed by the GVRD and the member municipalities, following extensive deliberation and consultation (Harcourt and Cameron 2007). It would take the intervention of the provincial government for the process to be amended and the LRSP be implemented in 1996. The bottom-line is that the avenues for collaboration are available to the various actors who would choose to align their political interests with one another.

Besides, (McCann 2013) suggests that cities connect through 'competition' and 'cooperation' when analyzing mobilities and boosterism of policies. Policy boosterism

can be understood as the process of promoting locally developed policies for the purposes of City comparisons within the global world (McCann 2013). This promotion of policies can be seen as a subset of the entire mobility framework concerned with policy movements. Cities also connect based on the need to win and realize that competition and cooperation especially at the regional scale are vital to avoid 'complexities' and 'uneven consequences' (McCann 2013, p.20). The rationale for cities to connect and cooperate with each other is to avoid the difficulties that could arise in region-wide policy implementation. The role of mobilities in my research is to highlight how policies are deliberated to avoid failures and ensure that consensus is built based on the governance model analyzed previously to serve the regional interest. PMV2 from Metro Vancouver speaks on the kind of competition found amongst municipalities across Metro Vancouver:

What we see is a mix of negative competition, positive competition, and different forms of collaboration and cooperation. And one of the values that the Metro Vancouver organization can provide is trying to discourage that negative race to the bottom competition and encourage more collaboration as a region. Sometimes you'll have like two or three really pro-growth municipalities, and they want to get, the next big sky train first. Maybe you'll see a little bit of sort of competitive language between their elected officials.

As examined in the previous body of literature, cooperation between cities in new regionalism is inclined towards the need to make the region economically competitive. Metro Vancouver from the interview quote above can actively work to discourage negative competition and encourage more collaboration and cooperation between municipalities for the greater good of the region. Under the Policy Mobilities concept, collaboration and consolidation between municipalities enables for more successful implementation of goals and strategies for the region. This concept is important for my study as it sheds light on the role regional planning plays in ensuring that the regional aspirations are shared and adopted by the municipalities. Therefore, policy mobilities represent a critical lens for understanding all the decisions that support the desire of the municipalities within Metro Vancouver to cooperate and manage growth within the region.

Policy mobilities discussed in this section deals with the aspects of mobility whereas municipalities are urged to collaborate with the region through tools like the Regional Context statements in Metro Vancouver. An insight on how the Context

statements act as a mobility tool for the region is explored in the next section. The mobilities discussed in other parts of this paper particularly the historical analysis chapter involve the other aspects of mobilities that track the changes that policies undergo over time. This mobility framework aspect may or may not lead to changes in policy, as the goal is mainly to draw lessons from the policy stories over time.

2.2.1. The Mobility of Policies amongst Municipalities within the Metro Vancouver region.

Municipalities within the Metro Vancouver region deliberate among themselves to come up with policies that showcase a shared purpose for the betterment of the entire region. In most cases, with the mobility of policies across the region through the strong governance structure of Metro Vancouver, deliberations and possible conflicts are avoided. According to Lovering (1999), the avoidance of conflict is a major shortfall of new regionalism as only success stories tend to be focused on. The process of avoiding conflicts could lead to the focus of telling success stories for regional planning to work. The importance of examining the role of Metro Vancouver in the revitalization of town centres like Metrotown using the mobilities framework is to outline the processes that enable sharing and cooperation. According to Metro Vancouver, the 2011 RGS is to be implemented as follows (Metro Vancouver 2013, p.57):

- 6.1.1 Metro Vancouver and affected local governments will implement the Regional Growth Strategy within a collaborative decision-making framework.
- This framework is based on provisions set out in the Local Government Act and in recognition by Metro Vancouver and affected local governments that collaborative decision-making is necessary in order to achieve the visions and goals in this Regional Growth Strategy.

Collaboration is required by Metro Vancouver and the involved municipalities for success of the goals outlined in the Regional Growth Strategy from 2011. In 2013, the City of Burnaby adopted the Regional Context Statement (RCS). The RCS identifies the relationship between the RGS and the City's Official Community Plan (OCP) (RCS 2013). Every municipality is required to prepare an RCS and this RCS states the steps each municipality has taken or is currently taking to ensure that its community plans towards development are in line with the RGS. The process would often involve various levels of deliberations and coordination between Metro Vancouver staff and City of Burnaby planning staff. The Regional Context Statement (RCS) then represents an

institutional mechanism that aids the transfer of policy within the region. The Director of Development and Urban Design with the City of Burnaby Johannes Schumann shared his thoughts on how he navigates through policies across other local municipalities:

I consider Vancouver and New Westminster and Coquitlam in the decisions that we make in development, but we don't relate on a project basis. I don't consult with City of Vancouver planners when we have projects at Metrotown close to boundary. I don't consult with Coquitlam planners, when we have projects in North Road. I don't consult New West planners when we have projects in Edmonds. I look at their land uses and it helps to serve us effectively. There's a benefit of the original table and having more structured engagement on the development level to ensure that we're working together.

Under the structure of governance of Metro Vancouver, municipalities easily create developments that transcend their boundaries with few consultations and roadblocks. The policy mobilities idea is concerned with the ease of policy movement towards the processes that enable sharing between proponents of a policy. Arndt et al. (2000) say that when municipalities agree to prioritize networking over individual interests, then success can be achieved when pursuing joint projects based on communication and cooperation. I deduce from the authors above that to achieve success on projects that cut across various municipal jurisdictions, cooperation rather than individuality is the most feasible approach.

The process of prioritizing the 'collective' rather than 'individual' interest is a vital role that the policy mobilities literature plays in understanding the consequences that regional planning can have on the recipient municipality in this research. In other words, examining how policy mobility manifest itself when looking at the influence of regional planning on the municipality is vital for my research. Mobilities then manifest by focusing on the collective rewards of networking as Arndt et al. (2000) describe for the region which ensures success of implemented strategies or policies. The author describes collective rewards as 'the opportunities to generate new urban and regional potential' (Arndt et al. 2000, p.1905). According to the author an example of how this would occur is by developing an informal division of labour that leads to an increase in the number of development options (economies of scope) at all levels. When all levels of government (regional and municipal) collaborate with each other, the act of networking can limit hierarchy and accomplish joint projects (Arndt et.al 2000). The collective rewards of

networking make the mobilities framework appropriate for understanding the effects that the regional aspiration to compete for economic growth can have for cities.

However, there is always the conflict of whose interests (regional vs municipal) is best served when operating under such a neoliberal metropolitan structure. And successful decentralization of development to peripheries (suburbs) relies on balancing regional interests with the action of municipalities (Arndt et al. 2000). The difficulty in balancing the interests of a region with the decisions that municipalities take, is vital in considering why a municipality would advocate for a certain urban development form (compacting through increased density) and the implications for such. An important aspect of understanding the balance of interests between the region and City is to examine the overlooked consequences of increased density to a regional town centre. The next section highlights the various municipal and regional approaches to the high-density compact urban form of development that emanates from this network of collaborations towards economic governance.

2.3. Approaches to compact development

Compact developments involve increasing density, often around transit networks, mainly to combat sprawl, protect the environment, and reduce pollution from car travels (Ibraeva et al. 2020; Cervero and Kockleman 1997; Rode 2018). Both 'densification' and 'compactness' have become buzzwords in urban planning (Charmes and Keil 2015, p.3). These words, much like 'sprawl' do not have a universally agreed-upon definition (Tsai 2005). The difficulty in being able to either define or measure density makes the study of compact developments interesting since this urban form involves density. Developing a compact city is a response to the 'car-dependent American suburbia' that persisted for most of the 20th century (Rode 2018, p.14). Compact development arose from the needs to reduce the dependency on car usage that plagued most North American suburbs including those in Metro Vancouver.

Compact developments which emerged as a response by urban planners to seek alternatives to car-dependency, fixes development around train stations, and advocate for reducing trips by motor vehicles, increasing non-motorized trips, and encouraging reduction of travel distances (Ibraeva et al. 2020; Cervero and Kockleman 1997).

Compact development as an urban policy rose in alliance with the emergence of sustainable development as an approach in the 1980s, whose approach supports market globalization, and increased competition between cities (Rode 2018). According to the author, sustainable development can be viewed as an enabler for the rise of compact development as an approach to urban policy planning. While increased competition between cities spurred economic development, this same competition also revealed the issues with social development that involved inequality (Rode 2018). According to the author, social inequality issues will persist when there is a lack of infrastructure that improves the quality of life of individuals. The focus of my research has always been to uncover the implications of developments for attaining equity.

But thus far it is unclear if the idea of compact developments having a historical reliance on sustainable development justifies its stance of being a key metric for attaining sustainability. My research is concerned with how cities handle the effects of this compact urban form of development. My research also questions the implications and costs associated with urban core densification in a compact form of development. Compact development resulting from increased density may not justify the idea that urban development has occurred sustainably in a place. In fact, 'the idea that the dense City is more sustainable than the low-density City can be contested on environmental grounds' (Charmes and Keil 2015, p.4). This is because population density is a major factor in determining available green space, hence an increase in population density would then reduce the available green space area thereby impacting the environment (Artmann et al. 2019). Simply put, increase in density particularly population wise is not necessarily synonymous with having a sustainable area. Though greenspace is a good measure of ecological sustainability as it includes the determination of land area which is used in my quantitative analysis. But my research questions the capacity of compact developments being socially sustainable rather than argue for which ecological indicator is suitable and why.

Regardless, compact urban developments are regarded as sustainable due to their characteristics that align closely with sustainability principles despite remarks by urban scholars that this link is neither simple nor straightforward (Pradhan 2017). The similar characteristics that compact development forms share with sustainability, make compact development allegedly sustainable. But compact developments are still advocated against sprawling developments due to their capacity to accommodate more

growth and limit vehicle travels and GHG emissions. According to Johannes Schumann the director of development and urban design with the City of Burnaby, in an interview on the benefits of the compact urban form of development:

Concentrated growth enables us to look at infrastructure investments in a more constrained area. If you look at road improvements or storm sewer hydro improvements in an area, it's a lot easier to serve a smaller area and upgrade those services. And then at the surface, you can create bicycle lanes, wider sidewalks, treeline boulevards, and plaza areas. The residents get the benefit of having those in a smaller location, really enabling them to walk or cycle or use micro mobility to get to these various amenities, rather than being spread out. Reliance on the car is vastly reduced by that concentrated development. One of the things to understand is that, while there is a desire from some residents to live in a high-density form, it may not be the preference of all. What you must do is to counterbalance that intensity of form and height with a commensurate amount of open space and activity space.

From the comment above, it is a lot easier to provide services in a constrained area and avoid sprawling out. Compact developments are desirable for most people to live and work in for so long as they provide enough amenities to counterbalance the consequences of not having enough private open spaces for activities. According to Charmes and Keil (2015, p.11), the definition of soft densification is one that 'compromises between exchange value and use value'; they claim that soft densification can overcome resistance by inhabitants while hard densification triggers strong opposition. An example of the effects of hard densification on citizens' well-being in Metrotown is examined in Chapter 5 of my research.

To improve the systemic responses to compact development in cities, there is a need to acknowledge the multi-dimensional scales that compact urban development policies and pressures such as densification and sprawl rely on and occur within (Artmann et al. 2019; Rode 2018). In other words, compact developments rely on policies that cut across multiple scales of jurisdiction; therefore, attention must be paid to these various scales of governance for improvements. This compact form of urban development requires cooperation amongst various other actors which I have examined in section 2.1 on new metropolitan governance. These actors include the public, local government (municipality), regional government and businesses. This consolidation process also represents an important step in examining the direct influences of compact developments towards the local areas they are being applied to.

Furthermore, Artmann et al. (2019), argue that 'urban expansion is an unavoidable fact entangled in economic growth (p. 4). Cities often expand under a rationale that involves the growth of the economy. Meanwhile Charmes and Keil (2015, p.4) argue that 'since the survival of humanity is at stake, there is no point debating the opportunity to increase density (which is key for compactness) of cities'. But I do not agree that the survival of humanity is at stake with regards to increasing density for cities. This is because as earlier stated by Charmes and Keil (2015) the concepts of compact developments and density have become buzzwords in the planning field. These concepts are subjective, difficult to measure, and do not have a universally agreed-upon definition (Tsai 2005). Therefore, it is unclear if the 'survival of humanity' as Charmes and Keil point out rests upon the need to densify. According to PMV3 from Metro Vancouver on why 'density' could be a deceptive and problematic word in the field of planning:

I used to work for the City of London in Ontario, and I wrote their official plan, and we removed density from the Official Plan. There are no density targets or anything because we called it the 'Mabel test'. Mabel some 75-year-old lady sitting in a rocking chair in her house next door gets a letter that says a 22 unit per hectare building is coming up. Mabel doesn't know what that means she doesn't have any clue. As planners we always talk in these terms, and a lot of the pieces are density driven, and I know they need the information. But we get so fixated on the density component that we forget about what we need to do. And back in the day, in the early 1900s and 1800s density wasn't a thing. People just planned communities and put up 10 storey buildings here and that was that. We've got into all these different targets, and I am not sure it has entirely helped us.

From PMV3's comments above, the introduction of the term "density" in planning is one that has found and built its meaning over the years. And even without explicitly focusing on the term "density", planning can still occur at an efficient and effective manner. Despite improving walkability, cycling, transportation, and access to amenities, compact development is often critiqued for its capacity to disrupt lifestyle, increase traffic congestion, and air pollution (Pradhan 2017). And some authors like Charmes and Keil (2015) suggest that planning discourses on the issue of sprawl at the metropolitan level should be disregarded due to scientific uncertainties on the environmental benefits of density at such scale. My research examines the effects of compact development on a municipal level specifically for my study area the Metrotown regional town centre whose scale is much smaller than an entire metropolitan area. My research also notes the City

of Burnaby's rationales for supporting compact development which include the provision of jobs, housing, and investments.

Density could be assessed by either considering the population density or building density, and regardless of which is employed density remains a key component for understanding compact developments (Pradhan 2017). Given the difficulty in being able to measure density as pointed out by several authors in this literature, my research does not only focus on assessing density. The measurement of density in relation to compact development remains a topic that is yet to be agreed on by urban scientists and planners (Pradhan 2017). Using density as a metric for measuring compact development remains inconclusive amongst urban scholars and planners. According to PMV3 from Metro Vancouver:

I am a firm believer that we shouldn't even be talking about density. Density is an irrelevant number, we should be getting people into centers, and focusing on how we delivered the density not how much density. Because you can go to Copenhagen, where everything's at six stories and the places are entirely dense and has the same density as a Metrotown but is much more liveable than everything up in massive towers concentrated in a smaller footprint. These foreboding buildings are possibly not delivered in a good way that supports walking and bicycling and rolling.

From the comment above, the focus on density can derail planners from the much more important question of how that density is being delivered and at what cost. Part of what my research seeks to uncover is why density is used as a metric for justifying compact urban developments, and the possible effects. Although the approaches to compact development literature have alluded to the benefits as well as shortfalls of using density to measure compact developments, my research makes some estimates on density using several indicators relevant to my study area. This estimation process enabled me to attempt to answer the second part of my research question examining the possible outcomes of compact developments in my study area. To analyze these possible effects within my study area, density is therefore assessed based on accessible indicators such as population, household dwellings, employment, and number of housing units.

Despite the arguments against having higher density for compact developments, compact developments can combat sprawl, improve transit choices and be sustainable. And others argue that 'higher densities, richly mixed land uses, and pedestrian-friendly

designs are thought to lower the rates of vehicular travel (i.e., trip degeneration), and personal vehicle miles traveled per household' (Cervero and Kockleman 1997, p.200). The bottom-line remains that higher density is and would always be a major feature of a compact city. But due to the difficulty of measuring density it cannot be assumed that compact developments aimed towards sustainable goals would simply suffice by increasing 'population density, building proximity, and number of residential units' (Pradhan 2017, p.45). While compact developments involving higher densities could lower vehicle use for neighborhoods its application should be justified beyond combatting sprawl and the contentious idea of being sustainable. The next section outlines how the Metro Vancouver regional body approaches compact development based on how regional planning is organized.

2.3.1. Metro Vancouver's Approach to Compact Development.

The Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) advocates for having compact form of developments to tackle sprawl, accommodate the incoming populations into urban centres and prevent encroachment into preserved lands (Metro Vancouver 2020). The Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR) is a provincial designation in which agriculture is recognized as the priority use and it protects about 4.6 million hectares of sustainable land across the province (British Columbia 2021). The ALR protection has continually been recognized and implemented in regional planning for Metro Vancouver. For the RGS, the introduction of the Urban Containment Boundary is an attempt to further protect the ALR from urban intensification (Metro Vancouver 2020).

As explored earlier in this chapter, the regional body works with the municipalities to make growth projections for the urban centres within the municipality. Although the municipalities work with the regional body to create the growth projections, the municipalities still have the greater control on how the growth projections are made as my research found. PMV2 from Metro Vancouver had this to say about the region's approach to even growth through compact development:

We serve the membership, and we do what the membership tells us to do. If they were in an imaginary world and told us to make sure the growth is distributed equally, then we'd have to figure out a way to make that happen. But they haven't done that, at least since the past few years that I've been here. Bearing in mind that the most a planner can do is guide growth. And at Metro Vancouver, we very gently guide

growth, and our priorities are not about which center, but that the growth is happening in the centers, that are transit oriented, have a good mix of amenities, and are resilient to natural hazards. Those are the real priorities for us.

Metro Vancouver does not focus on whether the growth that occurs within centres like Metrotown is distributed equally. The priority would be to ensure that growth occurs at these urban centres which further highlights the role the regional authority plays in increasing density. There is only so much the regional authority can do in this case given that the governance model is based on consensus and partnerships between both municipal and regional bodies. The priority for Metro Vancouver and the City of Burnaby is that growth occurs regardless of whether it occurs equitably. PMV2 remarked that Metro Vancouver acts on the priorities and direction set by its member jurisdictions and makes growth with equity a priority in so far as the cities agree that such process is necessary. This has been done through the policies of Metro 2040 (see strategies 1.2 and 1.3) which encourage an appropriate mix of amenities, shops, services, and infrastructure to be provided in Urban Centres and Frequent Transit Development Areas, and to a lesser extent in Local Centres (Metro Vancouver 2020). But PMV3 from Metro Vancouver takes off on a different approach to the whole increase in density at regional town centres and the consequences:

Metro Vancouver as a region has been a leader in North America in terms of densification around transit and around infrastructure. And there certainly will be more opportunities within the Metrotown core, and the mall, as potential de-malling could happen, and further intensification can occur. The balance here, arguably, is that it's not so much the amount of people it's how we've delivered the urban design and the public ground; are we creating vertical suburbs essentially? And I think that's the bigger question here. We tend to focus on how many people we're putting into these places is density enough? Are we doing enough density?

The focus should be on delivering good infrastructure in these places of intensification such as Metrotown and not on the level of density. My research has focused on examining how further intensification efforts towards higher density for a society may not well and truly address other broader issues. One such issue is housing affordability which has been a challenge for most of the municipalities across Metro Vancouver. According to Gordon and Richardson (1997), such intensification of density at the suburbs would cause the 'affluent populations' to transform areas to a point whereby there is an 'exclusion of households with different housing options and

preferences' (p. 102). Based on the author's argument having wealthy individuals resisting densification in an area would work to limit the housing options for less-affluent households.

Moreover, it was astonishing to learn that Metro Vancouver in the past made efforts in the right direction for equity while accommodating growth at regional city centres. According to Van Heerden et.al (2022) a major way to improve equity in planning is by ensuring that a variety of infrastructure is present and accessible to all. This realization led me to communicate with Christina DeMarco the former lead planner for the Metro Vancouver Regional Growth Strategy. In this interview she shared her reflections on working with Metro Vancouver on the build up to the RGS in 2011 and how they navigated the need to provide good planning for complete communities:

So, we got the planning directors together for all the municipalities that had a regional city center, and we met on a regular basis, and we actually met in each one of the city centers, and we had a walk around, and then we did an evaluation on a bunch of criteria. And, say okay. Are there enough jobs here? Is there a variety of jobs? Is there enough housing? Is there a variety of housing? Are all the community facilities for complete community needed? And we had a checklist of everything from colleges to the daycare. Then we did an evaluation of place making an urban design. Was it a pleasant place to be? Where there lots of restaurants? All that kind of thing.

The move by the former lead planner for Metro Vancouver Christina DeMarco seems to be a good way to assess the effectiveness of policies especially one that concerns intensifying growth in a compact form for communities. I conclude from the comment of DeMarco that the evaluation exercise was a step in the right direction by the municipalities towards trying to attain equity and address social sustainability. Having an adequate supply of amenities and infrastructure improves the conditions towards an equitable society (Van Heerden et.al (2022). Former lead planner Christina De Marco further commented on the results of the evaluation process:

We would go around and evaluate the centers, and then that helps each of the planning directors think a lot more about the regional city centers. And because of that exercise, a few of them updated their plans. They said okay you know what? we really can do better and the Metrotown was part of that group but it wasn't a priority for them at that time. They were doing other things and I don't know if the Burnaby planners said this to you but for a long time most of the planners say that Metrotown is just one of four of our centers.

According to Guimarães et.al (2020) evaluating the supply of infrastructures and level of accessibility to these infrastructures improves equity component of social sustainability. Therefore, the priority for municipalities like Burnaby with regional city centres should be to evaluate city centres like Metrotown to see how growth can be best managed equitably. One of the focuses of my research has always been to understand how the City of Burnaby deals with the implications that surround having a compact urban form of development around Metrotown. Indeed, if the priority of both the regional body and the City of Burnaby is only that growth occurs then it might be difficult to engage in the kind of evaluation that Christina De Marco and her team performed. The following section highlights the City of Burnaby's approaches to compact development.

2.3.2. City of Burnaby's Approach to Compact development

According to the Metrotown downtown plan, one of the visions of the plan is to 'further establish Metrotown's image as a leading town centre within Burnaby and fulfil its objectives as a regional city centre' (City of Burnaby 2017 p.6). Compact development for the City of Burnaby both satisfies the regional perspectives for town centres and further project Metrotown's image as being beyond a town centre. Metrotown geographically sits at the heart of the City of Burnaby. Over the years, particularly since the introduction of the Expo line SkyTrain, the intensification of development around Metrotown and other urban centres around the city has increased. According to the Metrotown downtown plan the aim of having a compact downtown is to improve the productivity, efficiency, and accessibility towards having shorter travel distances (City of Burnaby 2017, p. 5). According to Lee-Ann Garnett the deputy general manager of planning with the City of Burnaby on the benefits of this compact urban form of development:

The greatest benefit of having this compact urban form is that we do get that concentration of people and jobs in the Metrotown. And the regional town center becomes the lively place that people say they want to live and work in. You have concentration where you're able to support economic activity where it doesn't become a sleepy town at night, you have people who live there. Metrotown, is blessed because we have so much transit, we're in the middle of the region and if you think about geographic theory, we have a lot of people who live close by who can easily get to work in Metrotown.

Having a concentration of people and jobs in a compact form supports the viability and economic development of Metrotown. Another planner Johannes Schumann with the City of Burnaby believes that Metrotown is a prime example of how regional planning should relate and function with local municipal planning goals. In his words:

We're like the golden child when it comes to land use frameworks and meeting RGS abilities. And having Metro Vancouver's office in Metrotown is sort of a symbol and the fact that they support the growth of this area. It's important enough they had the choice to move anywhere, when they relocated from Kingsway buildings, and they chose to purchase the structure back in Burnaby because they feel that we embody that regional approach to planning, and we do take it to heart.

There is a great sense of confidence by the City of Burnaby planners that Metrotown is achieving its expectations as a regional town centre, and now becoming Burnaby's downtown. The expectations are for Metrotown to become a regional city centre to be in line with the regional body's desires as stated in the RGS (Metro Vancouver 2020). And if the City of Burnaby utilizes Metrotown's potential as a regional city centre where the most growth should be concentrated, then planning can be seen as a success. The regional body Metro Vancouver also seems to highly support the growth of Metrotown and has done so for a long time as the historical analysis section of my paper in Chapter 4 reveals. But as I argue later in this paper, simply following the regional plans may not be sufficient for addressing major issues especially at the local scale. Former Mayor Derek Corrigan and also a former city councillor who has been a Burnaby municipal politician for over three decades, believes that the regional plans were never intended to support housing affordability as is common practice today. In an interview with him for my research, he stated that:

The regional plans were never developed to achieve housing affordability. That was never what the plan was for. And the thing that you've got to remember is that the density, was to accommodate new growth in a way that was environmentally responsible. That was what the regional plan was for. This twist that's been put into it that somehow the density was supposed to create affordability is just fundamentally wrong. And the idea that you are somehow to achieve affordability in that process, means that you violated the very principles that it began upon. Now, when you walk away because there isn't enough supply of affordable housing, the housing crisis even becomes worse.

The former mayor seems to be against the idea that using more density to address housing affordability is a policy goal for the regional plans. He is of the opinion that the introduction of density was always to accommodate more growth and protect the

environment. Therefore, municipalities within Metro Vancouver could continue to provide the appropriate density to support the incoming population as long as growth continues, but also realize that density may not be the solution. As Derek Corrigan indicated, the municipalities should use density to stick to the job of supporting growth rather than reach for housing affordability despite the tools at their disposal. Even as stated in the 2011 RGS Metro Vancouver (2020):

It is recognized that all levels of government have a role to play in creating opportunities for diverse housing options and that federal and provincial funding is essential to meet the estimated demand for affordable housing. (p.45)

The RGS has made a recognition in line with what my research has argued for which is that higher levels of government should play a bigger role in ensuring affordable housing. The role according to the RGS has to do with providing the required funding. This recognition also sheds light upon the limitation of the governance approach for new regionalism to enable policy actors address an issue such as affordable housing. This notion has been at the forefront of my research.

My conceptual framework began by exploring literature on how the emergence of the new regionalist approach to planning fostered by the rise of neoliberalism has shaped how cities pursue development with an economic imperative. This new regionalist idea is made possible by analyzing the switch from metropolitan “government” to “governance” with the latter being the bedrock of this new regionalist movement. The literature on governance has illuminated that for cities/regions to compete economically with the rest of the world, a new regionalist approach grounded in neoliberalism is required. My literature review has found that the need to coordinate regionally not only avoids conflict but improves economic competition.

Furthermore, my second body reviewed pieces of literature on the movement of policies that occur either through municipal cooperation or sharing among cities. Although the context through which I frame my research question looks at regional strategies, the idea is that the strategies are intended to guide the policies that emanate within various municipalities. The notion from my research and the literatures is that these regional strategies often originate from policies (either local or global) that have previously been applied elsewhere and are now brought forward for municipal adoption. Therefore, the movement of knowledge that occurs when municipalities take ideas from

the regional strategies and apply them to their municipal plans represents the mobility of policy which establishes a strong framework for my research. Policy mobilities represent the pathway through which regional planning could influence the direction of municipal planning on urban forms such as compact developments.

The last body of literature I presented, examines the effects of compact development. These effects are characterized by increased density mostly around transit lines which acts to combat sprawl. Some of the rationale for compact developments rests on the need for regional coordination of growth and developments. Although as the literatures have shown it is difficult to assess the nature of compact developments without the lens of an urban form fostered by and towards economic development. However, most arguments for compact developments also cite its abilities to reduce pollution, vehicle use, and ensure some sort of sustainability. Moreover, the sustainability component of compact developments quite clearly satisfies the environmental and economic aspirations leaving the social element up to debate. For my research, the difficulty in measuring density contributes to the notion against equating compact developments with sustainability particularly as it relates to the often-overlooked social component. Compact developments are fostered by the mobility of policies in regional planning which presents various outcomes for the intended area.

The next chapter defines the methodologies used to arrive at my findings and results for my research and the purpose of each. The content analysis would examine the Metrotown plans, and specific regional plans that contribute to understanding how regional planning influences municipal urban development forms. The Interview section outlines the names and position of individuals involved in the interview process and how they were recruited for my study. Finally, the census data analysis involves looking at the indicators that help in revealing the role of regional planning in increasing density at my study area.

Chapter 3. Research design and Methodology

My research made use of a mixed methods approach of analyzing both quantitative and qualitative data. The methods I used for this research included content analysis, semi-structured in-depth interviews, and census data from Statistics Canada. Some meeting minutes particularly around when the RGS and RCS were implemented were analyzed for both the City of Burnaby and Metro Vancouver. The purpose of this research is to uncover how regional planning through the RGS either affected or did not affect the increased level of density through compact developments in the Metrotown regional town centre.

3.1. Content Analysis

For this project, I performed content analysis to analyze the concepts and rationale for creating “compact” town centre developments in my area of study (Metrotown). The list of documents for analysis were broken down into two categories which are listed in table 3.2 below. The first category consists of primary documents including the Metrotown plans the “earliest and most recent versions”, the Regional Growth Strategy, and the Burnaby Official Community plan. The latter chapter of this research reveals that there is a strong link between the RGS, the OCP and the Metrotown plans. The secondary documents include the regional plans from the earliest dates all of which predate the RGS, the Regional Context Statement, Land Use and transport plan. My research makes use of the content analysis approach similar to how (Puzio 2019) analyzes relevant municipal and regional documents related to Metrotown.

The following section explains the rationale and importance of each of the document selection used in this research. The 2011 RGS is the most recent regional planning document whose influence on the Metrotown regional town centre densification is analyzed in my research. The Regional Context Statement within the OCP ensures that regional goals are in line with any development project that occurs within the City of Burnaby. A more detailed explanation on how this link functions is offered in Chapter 5 of this paper. The two Metrotown plans particularly the most recent 2017 plan are drafted with considerations of the OCP guidelines which are informed by the RGS. The earliest Metrotown plan gives a background to how density and compact developments

were initially envisioned by the City of Burnaby and the possible effects of regional planning to this direction. All past regional plans are unique in their own sense regardless of similarities they might have to the “compactness” and “densification” rhetoric integrated in their documents. Therefore, they were all analyzed as data that provides context to understanding how ideas and notions to densify into a compact form may not be a novel practice. The previous regional plans also demonstrate how the long history of regional planning, in addition to the RGS, may have influenced compact development form for the Metrotown area.

Furthermore, the Regional Context Statement is intended to provide information on how the City of Burnaby is attempting to integrate the RGS into its OCP and the challenges the city face through this process. The land use and transport plan provide information on regional expectations for transport particularly at town centres. Overall, my research is designed to explain the long history of regional planning towards the creation and development of density for the Metrotown regional town centre. I analyzed the concepts around “compactness” and “densification” that surround these documents listed above taking into consideration how they are being applied to Metrotown. I created codes around the two concepts for all documents I analyzed using NVIVO software. These codes enabled me to focus on key aspects of each individual document that related to my research and proved useful in answering my research question. This research made use of open coding to develop analytic codes that would often occur in a descriptive manner initially due to how the narratives surrounding “compact development” and “density” might have evolved over time (Urquhart 2013).

Then I proceeded to use selective coding to group the analytic codes developed from the open-coding process to group related codes and discover which ones can be merged into a single selective code for better analysis (Urquhart 2013). This merging procedure enabled me to develop themes that I intended to use and investigate the role and definition of my data in answering my research question. From my preliminary analysis of the documents to establish their usefulness for my research, I found some key narratives I intended to analyze. According to Ritchie et al. (2014, p.203) these are often referred to as “sensitizing concepts” that are intended to be a bit broad for the initial phase of document analysis but re-emerge as sophisticated analyzed concepts as the research analysis gets underway. A major function of analyzing previous regional plans in this research was to help me create initial codes which were then input into

NVIVO to generate themes helpful in identifying useful concepts throughout the research. The reason for moving from open to selective coding is to reduce the data in a way that does not jeopardize the ability to answer the research question (Ritchie et. Al. 2014; Urquhart 2013). Moreover, the Christopher Puzio (2019) research on housing affordability within Metrotown used the coding process to demonstrate how concepts are constantly changing overtime. Therefore, my research makes use of such coding to consider the evolving nature of terminologies especially when performing a historical analysis of documents. The themes I generate in this document analysis process aided me in framing unanswered questions to ask the participants for the interview phase. Table 3.1 below gives an example of how this process of moving from open to selective coding was conceived in this research.

Table 3.1. Envisioning the movement from Open to Selective Coding

Selective Codes	Open Codes
Compactness	Increasing compact development around regional town centres
Densification	Maintaining high density around urban centres and transit networks
Urban Growth & Development	Planning for population, jobs, and housing units within cities
Economic growth	Concentration of jobs and investment infrastructure in urban centres

Table Data inspired from (Urquhart 2013, p.16-17). Note that the Open codes displayed on this table are only for illustration purposes and are not obtained directly from any actual document.

The Open coding data illustrated in the table are broad ideas, the actual research makes use of the same selective codes but then actual open codes from documents analysis are generated. This research also involved analysis of several meeting minutes for both the City of Burnaby and Metro Vancouver. The meeting minutes from the City of Burnaby and the GVRD board helped me in identifying key informants for my interview phase which the next section in this chapter further explains.

Table 3.2. List of Documents for Content Analysis

Primary Documents	Secondary Documents
Metrotown plan 1977	The Lower Mainland looks ahead 1952
Official Community Plan for Burnaby 1998	Official Regional Plan 1966
Burnaby's Regional Context Statements 2013	Livable Region 1976/1986
Regional Growth Strategy 2011	Plan for the Lower Mainland of British Columbia 1980

Metrotown Downtown plan 2017	Creating Our Future: Steps to a More Livable Region 1990
	Creating Our Future: The History, Status, and Prospects of Regional Planning in Greater Vancouver 1994
	Livable Region Strategic Plan 1996
	Land Use and Transport Plan 2008

Documents used for the Content Analysis phase of this research.

3.2. In-depth Interviews

The interview phase of this research was conducted with City of Burnaby and Metro Vancouver staff particularly those involved with the RGS process since 2011. The interview also involved personnel from TransLink, the regional authority responsible for transit across Metro Vancouver. The purpose of the interviews was to obtain overall perceptions on compact development from both a city and regional point of view and shed light on understanding the balance of regional goals with municipal efforts. The interviews also reflected on the perceptions of compact developments around the Metrotown regional city centre in achieving local goals, and the implication for compact development forms. The in-depth interview also provided a platform for the participants to provide data based on experiences and adopt a personal approach (Taylor et al. 2016). Since the interview was based on getting data from both a municipal and regional perspective, two different sets of interview questions were formulated for each organization. Table 3.3 below lists the names and positions of the interview participants.

Table 3.3. Names and positions of interview participants for this research

Name of Interview Participant	Position Held and Organization
PMV1	Planner, Metro Vancouver (anonymized)
Derek Corrigan	Former Mayor – City of Burnaby
Christina DeMarco	Former Manager of Regional Planning – Metro Vancouver
Lee-Ann Garnett	Deputy General Manager of Planning – City of Burnaby
PMV2	Planner, Metro Vancouver (anonymized)
Matt Craig	Acting Director of System planning – TransLink
Johannes Schumann	Director Development and Urban Design – City of Burnaby
PMV3	Planner, Metro Vancouver (anonymized)

Each of the participants for this study was recruited based on the roles they played and continue to play in enhancing the relationship between regional and municipal planning approach. A few of the participants like Christina DeMarco and Derek Corrigan were also involved in the development and implementation of the Livable Region Strategic Plan (LRSP) whose relevance for understanding the role regional planning plays for municipalities is explored in this paper. The rest of the participants have at one stage been involved with and continue to engage with the RGS and its function for both regional and municipal planning strategies. While some of the key informants were sourced from council meetings of both the City of Burnaby and Metro Vancouver, a few of the participants were recruited from documents such as the RGS, Context statements and Community plans. The deciding factor for recruiting each of the participants was based on their involvement with planning that intersect with the city and the region such as the 2011 RGS. The interview participants were contacted via email and introduced to the study and purpose of the study. And then consent was also obtained through signed forms sent through email prior to the interviews. PMV1, PMV2, and PMV3 were codes created for participants of my research interview phase in order to protect their identities.

3.3. Census statistical data

My census data is focused on increased density expressed by several indicators from 2006 which is one year before planning for the RGS began in 2007 till 2021. The data from this 15-year period provide evidence of increased density for Metrotown, the City of Burnaby and Metro Vancouver. About six census tracts have been identified as corresponding to the areas that constitute as Metrotown for my study and are listed on table 3.1 below. My study analyzed statistical indicators such as population, dwellings, employment (jobs) and number of units in buildings more than 5 storeys.



Figure 3.1. Visual representation of Metrotown area for my study
Retrieved from Google maps

The study area in green as depicted in Figure 3.1 above to the West covers the Boundary Road along Central Park, bordering Imperial Street to the South, Nelson Avenue to the East up until Kingsway and some areas to the North up until Burke Street. These areas for Metrotown cover about six census Tracts which are marked by the black arrows in the image above and analyzed in the census data tables. The combination of values from the six census tracts gives the total population for Metrotown in this study. The overall analysis and interpretation of the census data are reflected in the next chapter.

Table 3.4 Official Metrotown Areas and Census Tracts

Official Metrotown Areas	Corresponding Census Tract
Metrotown Downtown (Core)	226.03
Central Park North	226.04
Maywood	227.01
Central Park	227.02
Central Park East	228.03
Marlborough	228.04

Table showing the Metrotown Areas covered in this research and their corresponding Census Tracts. Areas correspond with the Land Use plan on the 2017 Metrotown Downton Plan (p.37).

The indicators used for this research were derived from Statistics Canada. Although most of the definitions were inspired from the Stats Can dictionary, my research involved some changes in the calculation for some indicators. The land area is calculated in square kilometres on the Census page, but my research converts this unit to hectares for ease of assessments. The indicators and their definitions are displayed on the table 3.5 below. The reasons for the use of the indicators including their merits and demerits are explained in the following paragraph.

The indicators of density used in this study include population which looks at the number of individuals that are present in the study area over a given period. Population also references how much the area has grown over time. One of the shortfalls of this indicator is that population is just numbers, and, in most cases, it is made on a projection basis prior to actual census data availability. Population density on the other hand gives the proportion of people based on how much land area is being utilized. The advantage to this indicator is the ability to include the changes to the land area that occur over time with respect to the population. The dwellings look at every possible kind of housing type available for the study area(s) in question. Due to the broadness of the dwelling's indicator, analyzing the number of units in buildings of five storeys and above gives some basis for considering high-density developments which this study is concerned with. And the decision to use number of units in buildings of five storeys and above is due to the availability of data for this indicator and lack of data for other classifications. The building density which is the average of the dwellings against the land area gives the value for the number of buildings being utilized per land area. This indicator is important for the visual outlook of the compact urban area that indeed both the City of Burnaby and Metro Vancouver hope to see. The employment density looks at the total number of jobs in each specific area examined divided by the total land area. This is a good indicator for this research as it gives an accurate measure of the total number of jobs within the area in question, and aids in determining how density may have increased or not. Although the idea of workplace might have changed due to the rising need to work from home as a result of the effects of COVID-19. Moreover, this situation may place a limitation to this indicator as the Statistics Canada site does not state if working from home is covered under this indicator.

Table 3.5. Statistical Indicators for this study and their definitions

Indicators	Definition
Population	Total number of persons in a given area
Land Area	Number of sq km (converted to hectares) of land in a given area
Population density	Total population divided by land area
Dwellings	A set of living quarters
Dwelling density	Total dwellings divided by land area
Employment	Total number of people employed in the labour force
Employment density	Total employments divided by land area
Apartment in buildings more than 5 storeys	Number of units in buildings with 5 or more storeys

Table showing the indicators and definitions derived from Stats Canada used in this research

The following chapter examines the influences that the long history of regional planning has had for determining the direction of municipal planning and development particularly for regional town centres. This historical analysis looks at key decisions such as the introduction of a plan and change in elected government that occurred within Metro Vancouver from the 1950s to date. Using the mobilities framework the analysis of the changes that policies undergo along the way is a vital component for understanding the specific ways that regional planning can play a role in the development that occurs within a municipality. The chapter concludes with an analysis of the housing affordability crisis in Metrotown and the struggles for development within the city of Burnaby.

Chapter 4. Historical Context to Regional Planning

This chapter highlights the importance of tracing the history of regional planning for better understanding of its impacts on modern day planning for cities and urban centres alike. It is important to examine previous regional plans in the context of current planning practice as they indicate the directions that planning undergoes and the mobilities involved along the way. The mobilities framework examines changes that occur with policies from time to time and creates the essence of looking at planning from the onset to current period. The approach of using a historical timeline for this analysis is to reflect the long history of influence that regional planning has had on the direction of municipal planning. This chapter also examines the changes in this role of regional influence which began as somewhat 'authoritarian' to a 'consensus-based' partnership. Therefore, the historical analysis using the policy mobilities framework will further reflect the role of regional planning in creating increased density for town centre development which is central to my research. Information from interview participants, statistical data from the census, and data from the regional plans and community plans analyzed in this chapter all contribute to show how the Metro Vancouver region influences the planning direction for Metrotown and the City of Burnaby. This chapter then concludes by an inclusion of the housing affordability crisis section which portrays the challenges to development that resulted from the influence of regional planning to the City of Burnaby.

4.1. Previous regional plans leading to the RGS

Several regional plans and reports have been implemented prior to the RGS in 2011. Although the RGS also known as the Metro 2040 plan due to its optimistic projection towards development in the region by 2040 is the second growth strategy for the Metro Vancouver region. Most regional planning documents for the Metro Vancouver region are primarily focused on 'managing growth', but the directions they each take to achieve that singular purpose differs, hence making the analysis of each document interesting. Overall, each regional document has played and continues to play a role in the way regional planning efforts can influence development directions of municipalities.

The next section explores the activities that occurred within the Metro Vancouver region, City of Burnaby and Metrotown from a historical perspective. The story timeline

begins with planning in the region from the 1950s and explores the region's activities including the incorporation of the first regional board and their first regional plan. The timeline traces the important regional and city activities and plans over this period and ends with current events up until the point of writing this paper. The specific context and importance of each plan to my research are examined in the timeline below. This process includes when the plan was enacted, the plans aim, and the effects of these towards uncovering the answers to the central questions posed in my research.

4.2. Historical timeline of planning and development around Metro Vancouver and Burnaby

4.2.1. Period of 1950s

Before briefing about the key features of this time which includes the formation of the Lower Mainland Regional Planning Board, it is important to note some key events that led to their formation. The flooding of the Fraser River in 1948 which Harcourt and Cameron (2007) consider in their book *City Making in Paradise* as being one of BC's most tragic natural events gave rise to the need to protect farmlands and communities' networks hence the creation of the Lower Mainland Regional Planning Board (LMRPB) to achieve this. The authors also noted the provincial government's amendment of the Town Planning Act to allow for the planning of regional areas and formation of the regional planning boards, given how ineffective planning was done at the time. A key highlight during this period is the formation of the first ever regional planning board for the Lower Mainland of British Columbia, as well as their initial plans and recommendations for growth management.

The Lower Mainland Regional Planning Board (LMRPB) was formed in 1949 by the Minister of Municipal Affairs with Member Municipalities such as Vancouver, New Westminster, Coquitlam, and Burnaby (LMRPB 1952). The LMRPB were 'tasked with the goal of preparing plans that aided the development of the region' (LMRPB, 1952 p. 2). The region at this time was plagued with the issue of managing the massive influx of populations into the urban areas. One of the first regional plans developed by the LMRPB was titled "The Lower Mainland looks ahead" published in 1952. A key individual involved in this was Peter Oberlander also known as the father of regional planning in B.C for his role in founding the LMRPB and the UBC School of Community and Regional

Planning (Harcourt and Cameron, 2007). The most vital recommendation of this plan is to uncover ways to limit and control the rate of growth especially in the rural and suburban areas of the Lower Mainland region. The plan recommends the division of areas into three sub regions: the urban, suburban, and rural of which places like Burnaby, Vancouver and New Westminster would fall under urban areas (LMRPB 1952, p.17). This plan also lists a host of problems that face small communities plagued by sprawling developments incapable of providing all the needs for individuals as healthy compact communities would. The Lower Mainland looks ahead plan suggests that:

The number and scope of the above problems suggest that some form of government above the municipal level is needed. This does not imply that the municipalities will disappear. It only means that many matters are growing too big for them alone and should be dealt with by a higher body or bodies, which will supplement municipal governments (LMRPB 1952, p.56)

The call for a higher level of government that functions above the local municipal authority would become the birthplace for regional planning within the Lower Mainland region of B.C. A major desire for regional planning is to address issues relating to growth and development that are too huge for municipal governments to handle alone.

The urge to manage the growth that was being experienced during this time gave rise to the formation of a regional planning board, the first of its kind within the Lower Mainland. The LMRPB would go on to create plans that eventually set the precedent for planning and managing growth regionally, most of which are explored further in this paper. One of the recommendations for planning the Lower Mainland in the 1952 plan was as follows:

The Regional Planning Board should extend its activities from the purely regional level to direct and assist planning programs in the smaller municipalities". This would be a desirable move, since the Board has already acquired a great deal of knowledge and experience relating to the municipalities and could effectively integrate regional and municipal planning to the advantage of both (LMRPB 1952, p.54)

But regional planning back then did not have the characteristics of the governance structure that exists for Metro Vancouver today. In fact, the plan called for 'authoritative' planning in metropolitan areas that were interlinked with each other (LMRPB 1952, p.54). This realization indicates how much regional planning has changed over the years. The LMRPB initially did not always get consensus by member

municipalities, hence the board needed to act in an authoritative manner that ensured that growth was managed which was its primary function (Harcourt and Cameron 2007). Although this is not a study of multi-level governance, my study could be seen as a way to try and understand multi-level governance.

Without adequate planning, growth would occur haphazardly and cause developments to sprawl into agricultural lands in rural areas causing varying degrees of destruction (LMRPB 1952). Figure 4.1 accurately portrays the situations that communities encounter with regards to unplanned growth scattered in areas outside the urban core. To contain growth within the circular shaded area on the image above would mean that sprawling is limited, vehicle trip distance is shortened, and growth is centered around the urban core. All these relate to the concept of increasing density by having compact developments around urban areas which is central to my research.

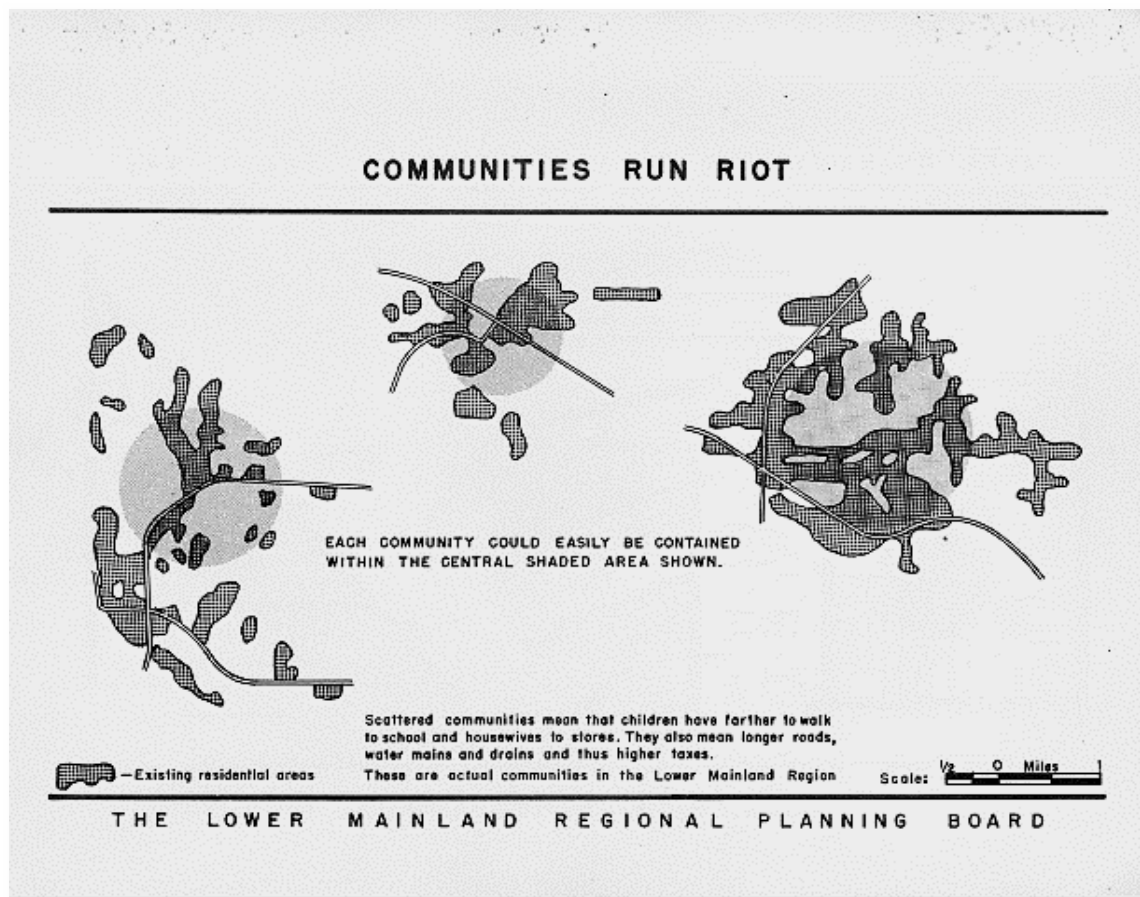


Figure 4.1. An image depicting the dangers of sprawl to the urban characters of communities.

Image retrieved from The Lower Mainland Regional Planning Board (1952), p.28.

4.2.2. Period of 1960s

This period is vital for the establishment of the first ever Official regional plan which outlined the role of each municipality and governance authority towards managing the growth within the region. The first Apartment Study for Burnaby was also conducted during this time frame. The Official Regional Plan for the Lower Mainland was established in 1966 by the member municipalities following recommendations from the LMRPB. Although the LMRPB had produced several reports on how to manage growth in the region such as the first regional plan in 1952 that was analyzed above, the 1966 plan was the first ever official regional plan. The general idea for the 1966 plan was for each member municipality to have a say in the decisions that affect the region. And although certain issues were best solved locally, other complex issues such as urban development, highway planning and transportation required regional cooperation (LMRPB 1966). The Plan serves as a policy framework within which local policies can be formulated, provides guidelines for private actions, and acts as a vehicle for co-ordinating the activities of the senior governments and their Agencies within the Region (LMRPB 1966, p.2). This plan was to serve as a guide for municipalities in the Lower Mainland on how growth and developments in the urban areas were to be managed. Below are some of the General policies of the plan (LMRPB 1966, p.3):

- 'Urban growth is to take the form of a series of compact Regional Towns, each with its own business and civic centre and each related to industrial areas, complementing a regional business, social, and financial Core in downtown Vancouver'.
- 'The Regional Towns are to be developed as serviced, compact URBAN areas to avoid unnecessary expenditures of public and private capital for premature scattered development'.
- 'The Regional Towns are to be developed through staged extension of subdivision and services to assure compact development that will support a transportation system '.

The ideas and concepts today of regional town centres incorporating a compact urban form of development can be attributed to this Official regional plan in 1966. The decisions to revitalize the economy of the region using the town centres as the core is characteristic of a new regionalism. Some of the objectives of new regionalism are to have a strong central city that contributes fully to the regional economy (Frisken 2001). In the same year, the City of Burnaby took up the services of Anthony Parr who became

the Director of planning and conducted an Apartment study in 1966 in line with the provisions from the LMRPB's official plan for the region (Pereira 2011). According to Pereira (2011, p.35) the most important feature of the Apartment study, was the 'town centre' concept which features high density developments connected to major amenities such as the Simpson-Sears retail complexes in present day Metrotown. Town centres in a regional perspective are areas that should accommodate a majority of a city's residential, retail and office space development. And out of the Town centres present in Burnaby, Metrotown serves as the best location to fulfill these regional obligations. The urban land use diversity component of the compact urban form is displayed on Figure 4.2 below, with the character of the various mixed-use of land for Metrotown.

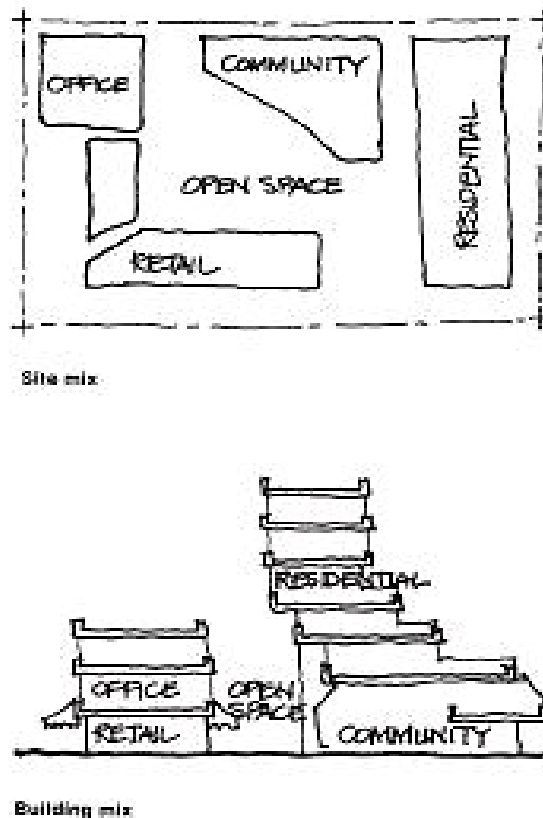


Figure 4.2. An image demonstrating the character of mixed use developments
Retrieved from District of Burnaby 1977 p.46

Now, "Town centres function as the focal point for a municipality, both in terms of commercial function and symbolic identity" (ACA's Design Associates 1989, p.38). The Simpson-Sears retail complexes along the Kingsway axis of present day Metrotown provided a key commercial function to the area as one of the biggest retail shopping

complexes at that time. It was suggested that for Metrotown to achieve its regional town centre status, it needed to embed a balance of mixed-use developments in residential and commercial land uses (ACA Design Associates 1989). Regional town centres do not only provide commercial and residential developments but are also able to utilize the combination of retail, residential and commercial functions. The existence of regional town centres as places where such mixed-use developments occur reflects the influence of regional planning for local development.

On the 13th of June of 1968, “Greater Vancouver Regional District” was adopted as the name of the region after being previously called the “Regional District of the Fraser-Burrard” (Order in Council 1873/1968). It would be known as the Greater Vancouver Regional District (GVRD) until 2017 when it gained its current designation as Metro Vancouver. And W.A.C Bennett would eventually dissolve the LMRPB in 1969 during his tenure as Premier of B.C, citing the mistrust between the board and the municipalities for the past 17 years since its inception in 1952 (Harcourt and Cameron, 2007). This order of March 1969 according to Harcourt and Cameron (2007) saw the GVRD assuming responsibility for developing the Official Regional Plan within Greater Vancouver. The GVRD’s assumption of the role of developing the Official Regional Plan further highlights the regional body’s desire for attaining regional interests as much of their plans would reveal.

4.2.3. Period of 1970s

Planning for development across the Greater Vancouver region in the 70s was geared towards managing the increased growth of the region. Harry Lash revolutionized planning in the Lower Mainland after moving from Toronto to Vancouver in the 70s and heading the newly formed GVRD planning board for 6 years. According to Harcourt and Cameron (2007) his method largely focused on citizens’ opinions and local governance that ensured that the voices of the individuals concerned are heard rather than the usual interests of politicians and developers. This local governance procedure was also much reflected in the 1975 livable region plan drafted by Lash and his staff members that considers citizen involvement in GVRD planning. The importance of this procedure is that it highlights a key component of the governance approach which Healey (2007) describes as the shift from individual interests to the interests of the public. Although it is

difficult to say if this shift was largely due to the efforts of Harry Lash or the structure of regional governance of the GVRD or a combination of both.

For Burnaby, the first Metrotown plan came into effect which outlined the land use guidelines for focusing growth in the Metrotown town centre. The Burnaby City council on 15th of January 1974 passed a motion to review the 1969 Apartment study brought on by the Director of Planning with regards to demands for high rise developments (Burnaby Council Report January 1974). This Apartment study had been responsible for the immense growth that surrounded the entire Burnaby area, particularly the Kingsway-Central Park (Metrotown) which had a total of 3441 existing apartment units between June 1969 and April 1974 (Burnaby Council Report January 1974, p.2). A major concern was the increase in the number of high-rises especially around Metrotown. And the livable region 1976/1986 clearly states that:

By suggesting higher density development in Burnaby, we are not advocating massive new high-rise apartment developments. While some additional high-rise development may be appropriate, we would urge that more attention be focused on medium density, low-rise development, such as town houses or compact housing (GVRD 1975, p.33).

While the Apartment study was fully focused on increasing the number of high-rise apartments particularly in the Metrotown area, the regional expectation was to have a mix of densities to accommodate a large proportion of residents. Figure 4.3 below shows that Metrotown in the mid 70s had one of the highest residential densities per unit hectare across the entire Greater Vancouver region. The influence of regional planning onto municipal development is clearly in play here. In a meeting in July 1974, Burnaby Council approved that Kingsway/Sussex town centre be designated as “Metrotown” where core development would occur within the area (District of Burnaby 1977, p.7). The name “Metrotown” accurately portrayed the urban development functions that were occurring in the space at the time.

SAMPLE RESIDENTIAL DENSITIES IN THE LOWER MAINLAND 1976

	Units per gross hectare	Units per gross acre
West Heights (Mission)	4.7	1.9
Laityview (Maple Ridge)	7.4	3.0
Ten Oaks (Matsqui)	4.9	2.0
Clearbrook (Matsqui)	7.7	3.1
Aldergrove (Langley Township)	4.9	2.0
Brookwood (Langley Township)	6.2	2.5
Sumas (Chilliwack)	6.2	2.6
Tsawassen (Delta)	6.2	2.5
Highlands-North Vancouver District	7.4	3.0
Coquitlam (Como Lake)	9.9	4.0
North Burnaby	11.1	4.5
Burnaby Metrotown	74.1	30.0
Southeast Vancouver	16.8	6.8
Kerrisdale (41st & West Blvd.)	72.8	29.5
Whalley (Surrey)	7.2	2.9
Broadmoor (Richmond)	8.9	3.6
Lonsdale (North Vancouver City)	78.3	31.7
Ladner (Delta)	10.4	4.2
West End (Vancouver)	189.6	76.8

Figure 4.3. An aggregate for residential density throughout the Lower Mainland in 1976.

Image retrieved from Plan for Lower Mainland of B.C GVRD (1980) p.22

The Livable Region 1976/1986 “Proposals to Manage the Growth of Greater Vancouver” was published on March 26, 1975 (GVRD 1975). This plan was to project and plan for the growth that would occur in the region within a 10-year period from 1976-1986. It was the regions desire for municipalities like Burnaby and New Westminster to support a great portion of population within the region and get plans for regional town centres started by 1980 (GVRD 1975). The livable region narrative that was promoted by the GVRD during the time was concerned with managing the growth influx into urban areas. Stephen M. Wheeler (2002) calls out ‘liveable communities’ as a buzzword in planning for North American cities, one that depends on the region to strengthen urban centres and revitalize transportation choices. It was the region’s desire for the Liveable Region 1976/86 plan to aid in the integration of growth at town centres. Interestingly, the strategy called for slower employment growth and policy to discourage office

development in Downtown Vancouver and elsewhere to enable this growth to be focused on regional Town centres (GVRD 1975). The idea here was to ensure that office developments that would have otherwise located in the attractive urban core of downtown Vancouver be limited so that people can live and work within regional town centres. The region's move to relocate some office developments from downtown Vancouver to regional town centres represents the regional aspiration to densify town centres which is a central aspect of my research. Furthermore, the plan recognized that:

Neither GVRD nor its member municipalities will be able to achieve the targets and other proposals set forth here on their own. Commitment and co-operation would be required from all levels of government (GVRD, 1975 p. 49).

The recognition of the need for cooperation between the municipalities and the regional body is a key component of the governance structure of Metro Vancouver. Metro Vancouver encourages a collaborative governance system in its relationship with the municipalities and local areas within the region (Metro Vancouver 2020). And Heinelt and Kubler (2005) agree that the metropolitan governance model enables metropolitan authorities and municipalities to interact towards achieving collective goals. Moreover, there is a big need for other levels of government (federal and provincial) to get involved as my research has strongly advocated for.

The Metrotown Plan of 1977 came in recommendation by renowned Planning director Anthony Parr. In his Letter to Mayor T.W Constable and Council, he cited the plan for Metrotown as a response to the negative consequences of urban growth (District of Burnaby 1977, p.3). The first Metrotown plan in 1977 was the city's initial steps to ensure that Metrotown achieved its status as a regional town centre. Metrotown would be developed within the Greater Vancouver Area to provide residential, commercial, cultural, and recreational facilities to enable Burnaby residents live and work within a community (District of Burnaby 1977, p.3). A major feature of the Metrotown plan was to ensure the utilization of a mixed-use development pattern that would serve the needs of the residents (District of Burnaby 1977). The Metrotown plan was considered to be in conjunction with GVRD's guidelines for regional town centres (ACA Design Associates 1989). The Metrotown plan being in alliance with the GVRD's guidelines represents an avenue for regional planning to exert its influence towards municipal development.

Recall that one of the proposals for growth in the Livable Region 1976/1986 suggested that office growth be slowed in the urban core for regional town centres to thrive commercially. But data suggests that most of the growth achieved by town centres was attributed to the population and economic growth rather than the 'expected deflection of growth away' from Vancouver (ACA Design Associates 1989, p.24). The effectiveness of the town centres program provided the necessary growth as opposed to the region's directive of limiting growth at the core. Some of the features of the town centre concepts includes (ACA Design Associates 1989, p.20):

- Town centres were intended to distribute the costs and benefits of high-density developments more equitably throughout the region, Burnaby Metrotown, Downtown New Westminster, Coquitlam.
- Town centres were to be important places in the suburbs, concentrating high density commercial and residential development.
- Town centres were to provide attractive locations for office development as alternatives to downtown Vancouver.
- Town centres were also to provide a focus for development of the transit system, allowing the provision of high-quality services.

The effectiveness of town centres in distributing the costs and benefits brought about by high density in an equitable fashion is central to my research. As later parts of my research demonstrate that attempting to achieve equity through high density developments is a complex task that resulted to a demoviction crisis and change in government.

4.2.4. Period of 1980s

This decade of the 1980s sees an update to the first official regional plan, and the impacts of the development of transit via the SkyTrain for Metrotown and Burnaby. But it is also important to note as Harcourt and Cameron (2007) remark in their book *City Making in Paradise* that in the 1980s after the livable region plan came into effect, regional planning influence was starting to diminish. The relationship between the municipalities and the GVRD was very fragile just as a 1983 Act seeking to abolish regional planning was looming (Harcourt and Cameron 2007). Prior to 1983, the regional district prepared plans and municipalities simply complied, and such a hierarchical

system was also problematic (British Columbia 2006). According to Savitch and Vogel (2000):

Metropolitan governments look good on paper, but the record is mixed. They appear to do best during their initial years of operation and act with great gusto, but they are not renowned for their longevity (p.163)

But the GVRD through the intervention of the provincial authority aided in restoring the longevity of the planning body amidst the usual challenges (Harcourt and Cameron 2007). The presence and role of another upper governmental authority may be required for not just longevity but success in implementing plans.

On the 15th of February 1980 during a council meeting, it was recommended by the Director of Planning for Burnaby, Anthony Parr, that the city's Light Rapid Transit (LRT) route for Metrotown station be in conjunction with the Metrotown development plan as a high priority core location (Council report February 1980). The Plan for the Lower Mainland of BC was adopted on October 23, 1980, as an update of the Official Regional Plan of 1966. Although the Official Regional Plan 1966 provided a good basis for managing growth in the region, it was ascertained that majority of 1980s residents had no knowledge of this previous plan (GVRD 1980, p. 3). The 1980 regional plan would incorporate public views and opinions towards various developments and planning directions. This plan is a framework for a continuous process to guide the development of the Lower Mainland of British Columbia. With some minor variations, it also constitutes the basic text of the updated Official Regional Plans for each of the four regional districts (GVRD 1980, p.3). A development strategy was introduced in this 1980 plan to reflect on the experiences since the implementation of the 1966 Official regional plan and to encourage more residential development in core areas. According to the Lower Mainland Development Strategy "the development strategy would increase the proportion of population locating north of the river from 26 per cent to 38 percent" (GVRD 1980, p.19) More importantly the plan notes that:

It would be impossible to achieve the development strategy upon which this plan is based, if development continues at present densities, because there would be insufficient land available outside the agricultural areas and the floodplain in certain parts of the Fraser Valley for the people who will have to be accommodated. For these reasons, the achievement of higher residential densities through infilling of existing residential areas and through more compact design of family housing is a key element of the

strategy. Extensive cooperation involving municipalities and the private sector is essential to its realization (GVRD 1980, p.22-23).

The realization that cooperation between municipalities is required for the strategy to be successful is vital as opposed to previous plans such as the LMRPB 1952 plan that called for 'authoritative' planning (LMRPB 1952, p.54). This realization also reinforces the need for municipalities to aspire to achieve regional goals by accommodating growth. The cooperation between private and governmental structures is a key component of 'new regionalism.' The advocates of new regionalism highlight the importance of public-private partnerships within metropolitan areas (Sancton 2001). But the integration of public-private partnerships (PPPs) in metropolitan governance should not absolve higher levels of government from further contributing to metropolitan governance.

As of 1983, "the GVRD reported that Metrotown had surpassed the goals established under the regional town centres concept in terms of office floorspace, retail floorspace and number of dwelling units" (ACA's Design Associates 1989, p.29). The regional town centre as previously pointed was immensely focused on having high density mixed developments which the Metrotown regional centre was committed to achieving. Only the Metrotown within the GVRD was regarded as the most highly developed town centre, as other town centres such as Downtown New Westminster, Surrey, Richmond, and Coquitlam were developing but at a slower pace than Metrotown (ACA Design Associates 1989, p.39). The development of Burnaby Metrotown is related to developments in the entire Metro region especially Downtown Vancouver and other 5 designated town centres, and therefore cannot be examined in isolation (ACA Design Associates 1989). As earlier mentioned, the Livable region 1976/86 plan required coordination between municipalities and the GVRD for the town centres program to be successful. The importance of the stories of other town centres around Metrotown is a component of mobilities that examines the entire context that enabled Metrotown attain this position of a highly developed town centre. Mobilities help examine what is learned, how knowledge is transferred, and from whom when regional planning enables consolidation between municipalities towards a common interest.

The Town Centres program which began in the 1966 Official regional plan statement calling for "a series of compact regional towns" had evolved to the GVRD Board's resolution to "develop regional town centres in 1972". But the biggest

consistency with this program is to concentrate suburban high density commercial and residential development (ACA Design Associates 1989, p.19). The concentration of high density at regional town centres regardless of the program or period can be seen as the goal for the GVRD. The aspiration to concentrate high density at regional centres highlights the role of regional planning to influence municipal development. In the context of the GVRD's regional town centres program, "Burnaby's Metrotown was by far the most successful case in the region" (ACA Design Associates 1989, p.28). The construction of the EXPO line SkyTrain in 1986 which linked Burnaby to Downtown Vancouver may have contributed to this success although there is no evidence to support such claim.

4.2.5. Period of 1990s

In July 1990, the GVRD adopted the "Creating Our Future: Steps to a More Livable Region" plan to enhance livability in the Greater Vancouver region which was finally introduced in September of 1990 (GVRD 1994, p.8). A major issue to contend with following major population growth into a region is ensuring that residents have livable conditions. The initiative is to ensure that 'decisions made at the individual, local, and regional levels are appropriated towards maintaining livability for the entire region' (GVRD 1994, p.9). Gordon Campbell the then Mayor of Vancouver and chair of the GVRD board sought to have a form of regional governance that sees the GVRD as one system of local government (Harcourt and Cameron 2007). The focus according to him was to concentrate on issues all municipalities agreed on so that when issues would have been dealt with there would be little time to focus on issues they disagreed on (Harcourt and Cameron 2007, p.125). This "Creating Our Future" plan was to ensure that the more often overlooked social components to growth and development in the region were addressed (Harcourt and Cameron 2007). My research has questioned the capacity of regional planning in addressing social component issues associated with growth and development.

In July 1994, the Creating Our Future plan was revised and termed as "Growth Management" to assess the performance and success of the earlier 1990 plan. This plan focused on the history of planning in the GVRD including an evaluation of previous plans with recommendations for how the region can achieve its goals. But "Creating our Future", as sophisticated and well thought out as it was, it was still a "vision" and not a

“plan” (Harcourt and Cameron 2007). There was no road map as to how the targets and goals would be achieved and this was a major worry to municipal planners who also feared their sovereignty threatened by regional involvements (Harcourt and Cameron 2007). According to Savitch and Vogel (2000), the viability of local government is threatened when higher levels of authority step in to handle the situation of managing growth at the municipal level. The revised Creating Our Future plan was ambitious and caused concerns to local planners who feared an imposition on the way growth would be managed within their local areas.

Therefore, it was this need for a plan to address regional issues that caused the Livable Region Strategic Plan to be conceived in the mid 1990s which also featured the creation of Green Zones consensually agreed by the municipalities (Harcourt and Cameron 2007). According to Ken Cameron in his co-authored book *City Making in Paradise*

We had protected the major resource lands in the region, and we had established an urban containment boundary that would force us to be conservative with the land we had left ourselves for the construction of cities and towns. Regions such as Ottawa and Portland had spent years in acrimony attempting to defend green belts and urban growth boundaries that were seen as heavy-handed denial of the development aspirations of landowners and municipalities. Here we had arrived at the same place through a constructive process of consensus (Harcourt and Cameron 2007, p.132).

The Livable Region Strategic Plan (LRSP) was adopted by the GVRD on January 26, 1996 and was classified as a Regional Growth Strategy on February 10, 1996 (GVRD 1996, p.1). But before the LRSP could be implemented, the Growth Strategies Act was passed on June 1995 by Minister of Municipal Affairs Darlene Marzari, and it ensured that regional growth strategies were deemed legitimate by the provincial authority. (Harcourt and Cameron 2007). This decree also reflected the consensus-based approach to regional planning that the GVRD over the years and under Ken Cameron had always intended to see. The LRSP whose primary goal is to maintain livability and protect the environment from expected growth, relies on the growth principles of the 1990 “Creating Our Future” plan (GVRD 1996, p.6). The LRSP being the first ever Regional Growth Strategy adopted by the GVRD board makes it a very significant plan for analyzing the relationship between the influences of regional planning to municipal development.

The Livable Region Strategic Plan's goal is to have about 70% of the region's population located in the Growth Concentration Area by 2021, up from 65% in 1991 (GVRD 1996, p.12). Although previous plans sought to focus growth particularly in urban centres and regional town centres, the LRSP focuses on the agendas of previous plans with the additional lens of managing land use and the transportation system within the region (GVRD 1996). According to Harcourt and Cameron (2007), a key challenge and possible game changer was to infuse land use development planning with transportation planning. An approach that had never been successfully attempted by any region in North America before, and one that would set the precedent for how regional planning is conceived in Metro Vancouver today (Harcourt and Cameron (2007). The Livable Region Strategic Plan advocates for:

Developing a more compact metropolitan region is a natural companion to building more complete communities. In essence, the strategy would see most residential growth in the region concentrated in its core municipalities, identified in the Strategic Plan as the "Growth Concentration Area." (GVRD 1996, p.12).

The "Growth Concentration Area" of the LRSP is designed to accommodate the highest amount of growth including jobs and residential housing units. The LRSP represents the most relatable plan to the RGS analyzed as the primary focus of my paper due to the manner of organization of its growth strategies. The strategic plan also calls for partnerships towards the successful implementation of the Strategic Plan, since land use, development and transportation decisions are being made every day in each of the municipalities that make up Greater Vancouver (GVRD 1996, p.14).

It is the GVRD's board objective that as community plans are reviewed and updated the municipal growth capacities change to support realization of the region-wide targets (GVRD 1996, p19).

It is important here to examine the crucial relationship between what the region envisions and what the municipalities can offer based on their various capacities. This recognition leads to the question of how municipalities respond to and balance their interest with that of the region. The aspiration to meet the regional targets by tasking the GVRD board to ensure that municipal plans are updated to support growth indicates a major role played by the region in increasing density within municipalities. Speaking with the Former Mayor of Burnaby Derek Corrigan who served as a politician for the City for about three decades on his experience working with the LRSP:

The livable region strategy requires a strategy, it requires a program, and it requires policy. But most importantly, it requires everybody to agree on it, and to ensure that that policy is going to be implemented widely throughout the region, which is something that has happened in very few areas in North America. And that's why the livable region strategy and what the Greater Vancouver Regional District did was first so unusual, so unique that other cities were looking at it as a model. And it was also a massive political accomplishment to get that kind of unanimity among the diverse municipalities that make up the region.

The fact that GVRD's implementation of the LRSP was thought as unique and worthy of emulation across North America would indicate the role of policy boosterism in mobilizing policies across spaces. According to McCann (2013) boosterism involves enhancing the image of the locally developed policies to garner recognition and acceptance by the global world. The GVRD requires municipalities to agree on the strategy before it can be implemented, and part of the reasons for this is for provincial government acceptance. The first time the provincial government had to intervene in this process was in September 1995 when the City of Richmond, Surrey and Township of Langley declined to accept the LRSP proposed by the GVRD and the member municipalities (Harcourt and Cameron 2007). My research highlights the vital role that the provincial government play for regional planning and the growth strategies to be continually implemented in the way that influences local /municipal development.

Furthermore, the provincial government's agreement to retain responsibility for \$1billion out of the \$1.5 billion debt for the Skytrain project aided in the birth of the newly incorporated GVTA formed on October 31, 1997 (Harcourt and Cameron 2007, p.162). Having the provincial government fund the Skytrain project highlights the importance of the presence of a higher governmental authority in aiding regional planning on complex issues that might go beyond their scope. According to the authors of *City Making in Paradise* Harcourt and Cameron (2007), the provincial governments in B.C intervene far less than other provinces such as Ontario and Quebec. In the case of Ontario for example there is still the presence of the Ontario Municipal Board that reviews local bylaws (p.174). Moreover, Frisken (2001) in her paper on regional governance in Toronto narrates how the Ontario Provincial government supported the construction of low-cost housing and adopted programmes like cooperative housing and non-profit housing following a change of housing policy by the federal government in the mid 70s. The author further stated the role of the provincial government in softening the impacts of the capital borrowings incurred by Metropolitan government of Toronto for their

services. The role played by the provincial government both in B.C and Ontario is reflective of a crucial argument in this paper that regional planning alone may not be sufficient in handling difficult issues such as housing affordability.

The Official Community Plan (OCP) for Burnaby was adopted by City council on June 15, 1998. The challenge of managing expected growth and population flow into the Metro Vancouver region, prompted the need to provide a regional solution to a regional problem (City of Burnaby 1998). The OCP therefore is a city-wide document that demonstrates how land is used in managing growth directions of the region (City of Burnaby 1998, p.2). The OCP also outlines the city's plans to manage growth based on the guidelines and recommendations of the regional body and is expected to be in terms with the RGS for the Greater Vancouver region. The expectation for the OCP to be in line with the RGS represents the influence of the region onto municipal planning and development. An In-depth analysis of the role the OCP plays in aligning municipal planning with regional strategies is demonstrated in the next chapter.

4.2.6. Period of 2000s

On November 16, 2002, Derek Corrigan won the Burnaby mayoral elections after serving on the Burnaby City council for several years. He won the election by polling 14,403 votes to beat the closest runner Bonney Brian who polled 9,172 votes (Council Report December 2002). The results of the November 19, 2005, municipal elections saw Derek Corrigan re-elected again for a three-year term after polling 17,662 votes to beat to defeat his counterpart Andrew Stewart who secure 13,952 votes (Council Report, December 2005). This re-election of Derek Corrigan is significant as it highlights a continuation of the aspirations of the Corrigan administration towards planning and development for the city. The aspirations which hinge on following the regional plans to support growth and increase density would not come without consequences which are examined later in this paper.

In 2005, Greater Vancouver had won numerous awards worldwide including being named as the most "livable city" in the world according to Economist Intelligence (Harcourt and Cameron 2007, p.186). The concept of policy mobilities and boosterism is in play here in which the GVRD creates a model that is deemed very successful and requiring of replication from other cities. A term McCann (2013) describes as "relational

construction” by which policy boosterism enables these intending cities and areas to admire and try to replicate these policy models elsewhere. They become the focus of attention and worth emulating. But despite the various accolades for the GVRD, Harcourt and Cameron (2007) remarked that the successes were good only on a short-term basis as they often measured physical attributes such as land use, and farmlands and metrics such as sustainability needed to be incorporated into the livability status. The Brundtland commission’s definition of sustainability is aimed at protecting resources for future generations, which has a long-term connotation. Therefore, the successes and awards credited to the GVRD would seem ineffective if all sustainability principles particularly the social component are not addressed as part of its livability achievements. Recall that the initial Creating Our Future 1990 plan had also questioned the ignorance of the social components relating to growth.

In July of 2007, the GVRD Board decided to change the name Greater Vancouver Regional District to Metro Vancouver Regional District (MVRD), stating that “Metro” was aimed at representing large urban centres in contrast to “regional districts” which often refer to rural areas (Metro Vancouver 2022). On the 21st of February 2008, the City of Burnaby planning department and council members made recommendations on the Land Use and Transportation Agenda to the Metro Vancouver Land Use and Transportation Committee (LUT 2008, p.46). The Agenda of the April 15, 2008, report hinged on some city-wide proposals for the draft Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) and inputs for the preparations of the “Choosing Our Future” regional document for Metro Vancouver (LUT 2008, p.47). The outcome and inputs from this plan would aid in preparation for successful implementation of the RGS in 2011. On the 15th of November 2008, Derek Corrigan won the local elections with 20,365 votes (Council report, December 1, 2008). This third re-election would coincide with the period of drafting the RGS and the expectations from the municipalities within the region especially with respect to accommodating and managing growth.

The percentage growth in population of Metrotown in the Table 4.1 from 2006 to 2011 stood at 3.7% which is the period just before the RGS was implemented. Post 2011 is significant for both the region, the City, and Metrotown itself as it represents the moment after the Regional Growth Strategy had been implemented along with its aspirations. In the period 2011-2016, population growth of 10.3% in the Metrotown urban core was more than double the 4.3% growth in the City of Burnaby, and almost double

the 6.5% growth in the Region as a whole. Between 2016-2021 would see the growth dip to 9.9% probably due to the global pandemic. The next timeline highlights some of these specific growth strategies from the 2011 RGS also known as Metro 2040 based on its expected growth and developments by the year 2040.

Table 4.1. Metrotown, Burnaby and Metro Vancouver Population by Census year

	2006	2011	2016	2021	Percentage Growth (%) 2006-2011	Percentage Growth (%) 2011-2016	Percentage Growth (%) 2016-2021
Metrotown Population by CTs							
226.03	5,837	6,426	7,638	9,709			
226.04	2,495	2,479	2,600	3,739			
227.01	4,076	3,941	5,290	4,697			
227.02	5,034	5,381	5,181	5,991			
228.03	4,693	4,542	4,566	4,564			
228.04	4,987	5,348	5,728	5,387			
Metrotown Total	27,122	28,117	31,003	34,087	3.7%	10.3%	9.9%
City of Burnaby (including Metrotown)	202,799	223,218	232,755	249,125	10.1%	4.3%	7.0%
Metro Vancouver (including Burnaby)	2,116,581	2,313,328	2,463,431	2,642,825	9.3%	6.5%	7.3%

Total Population and Percentage growth for Metrotown CTs, City of Burnaby, and Metro Vancouver from 2006-2021, data retrieved from Statistics Canada.

4.2.7. From 2011 and Beyond

The City of Burnaby on the 7th of March 2011 accepted the RGS by resolution (RCS 2013, p.1). And the Greater Vancouver Regional District Board adopted the Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) on July 29, 2011 (Metro Vancouver 2020). Given the inherent challenge of managing growth and an influx of population into the Metro Vancouver region, the RGS responds to these issues using five key goals to achieve the desired outcome (Metro Vancouver 2020, p.6). The RGS just like several other regional plans and growth strategies is tasked with ensuring that all municipalities and areas within the Metro Vancouver region pursue growth in a way that best serves the entire region. Some of the plan's policies on the importance and need for compact communities include (Metro Vancouver 2020, p.4-5):

- A compact urban area including transit-oriented development reduces greenhouse gas and common air contaminant emissions.
- A compact urban area generally uses infrastructure more efficiently and places less demands on the overall system.
- Compact urban growth reduces the ecological footprint of development (per capita)
- Requires municipalities to prepare Housing Action Plans that supports higher densities and intensification which provide a diversity of (more affordable) housing options.

The 2011 RGS supports growth and intensifying the urban form particularly in urban centres and FTDA's. There are various benefits derived from having a compact form of development such as reduction of GHGs and improving mobility. However, the RGS aim of getting municipalities to support higher density and intensification towards achieving housing affordability is arguable and forms part of the consequence of density for my research study area.

Table 4.2. Statistical Indicators of Increased density at Metrotown

Metrotown	2006	2011	2016	2021	(%) Growth 2006-2011	(%) Growth 2011-2016	(%) Growth 2016-2021
Population	27,122	28,117	31,003	34,087	3.7%	10.3%	9.9%
Population density (population/hectare)	79.07	80.56	89.09	98.23	1.9%	10.6%	10.3%
Land Area (hectares)	343	349	348	347	1.7%	-0.3%	-0.3%
Total Dwellings	11,338	11,679	14,140	18,270	2.5%	21.1%	29.2%
Dwelling density (dwellings/land area)	33	33	41	52.65	0%	24.2%	28.4%
Apartments in buildings more than 5 storeys	6,112	6,485	8,270	10,825	6.1%	27.5%	30.9%
Employment	23,680	24,585	27,590	30,380	3.8%	11.9%	10.1%
Employment density (jobs/land area)	69	70	79	87.6	1.4%	12.9%	10.9%

Data retrieved from Statistics Canada. 2006. 2011. 2016. 2021.

The population density for Metrotown as the Table 4.2 above shows between 2006 to 2011 did not increase largely in comparison to the other years (2011-2016 and 2016-2021). The dwelling density as the table shows had 0% increase between 2006-2011 but experienced the highest increase between 2016-2021 with a value of 28.4%. The employment density follows similar pattern of a small increase of 1.4 % between 2006-2011 and then the greatest increase experienced between 2011-2016 with 12.9%. A possible explanation for this difference in value is because the RGS was still in the developmental stages prior to 2011 and the focusing of growth to the regional city centres may have not been intensified. When the RGS was implemented in 2011, regional city centres like Metrotown had the obligation of accommodating most growth. Therefore, it is unsurprising that the population, dwelling and employment densities of Metrotown grew steadily between 2011 to 2016 and 2016 to 2021 to complement the increase in the various base indicators.

For Burnaby, On November 19, 2011, Derek Corrigan again emerged as the winner of the Burnaby Municipal elections for a 3-year term with 25,053 votes. (Council Report, November 2011). This would be the fourth time Derek Corrigan would be elected as the Mayor of Burnaby to continue his leadership legacy. Some of these legacies and tenacious direction towards managing growth as well as the consequences are explored in the next chapter.

The current population for the City of Burnaby in 2021 is 249,125 as shown in the Table 4.3 above. The population of Burnaby has grown steadily since 2006, with the smallest growth change occurring between 2011 and 2016, and the highest between 2006-2011. The population density increase for Burnaby was at its highest between 2006-2011 with 8.3%, with the lowest value of 4.3% between 2011-2016 and rebounding to 7.1% between 2016-2021. The dwelling density increase between 2006-2011 stood at 7.4% and between 2011-2016 was 10%. The employment density between 2006-2011 grew by 5.8% and increased to 7.7% between 2011-2016 and experienced a big increase of 15.2 % between 2016-2021. This growth pattern seems to be in line with regional aspirations despite missing out on some growth projections put forward in conjunction with Metro Vancouver in the 2013 Regional Context Statement. Also note that the data for Burnaby also includes other town centres and areas that make up the City.

Table 4.3. Statistical Indicators of Increased density at City of Burnaby

Burnaby	2006	2011	2016	2021	(%) Growth 2006-2011	(%) Growth 2011-2016	(%) Growth 2016-2021
Population	202,799	223,218	232,755	249,125	10.1%	4.3%	7.0%
Land Area (hectares)	8,912	9,061.00	9,061.00	9,057.00	1.7%	0%	-0%
Population Density (population/land area)	22.76	24.64	25.69	27.51	8.3%	4.3%	7.1%
Total Dwellings	82,950	91,383	98,030	107,046	10.2%	7.3%	9.2%
Dwelling density (dwellings/land area)	9.31	10	11	11.82	7.4%	10%	7.5%
Apartments in buildings more than 5 storeys	14,671	19,055	22,880	29,715	29.9%	20.1%	29.9%
Employment	109,545	120,290	125,815	137,320	9.8%	4.6%	9.1%
Employment density (jobs/land area)	12.29	13	14	16.78	5.8%	7.7%	15.2%

Data retrieved from Statistics Canada. 2006. 2011. 2016. 2021.

The City of Burnaby in 2013 adopted the Regional Context Statement (RCS). According to the document, “the RCS is the key document that identifies the relationship between the Regional Growth Strategy (RGS) and the City’s Official Community Plan (OCP)” (RCS 2013, p.1). The City of Burnaby submitted its RCS to the GVRD for acceptance on July 26, 2013, which was received with the mandate to respond within 120 days (Greater Vancouver Regional District November 2013, p.49).

The GVRD accepted the City of Burnaby’s RCS on November 15, 2013, although it outlined several recommendations such as (Metro Vancouver Regional District January 2019, p. 37):

- consider adjusting municipal growth projections.
- reference detailed policies to direct office development to Urban Centres; and
- commit to developing a Housing Action Plan.

The Census data analyzed above reveals some discrepancies with the projected growth for Burnaby and Metrotown and the actual Census data released earlier in 2022. The acceptance report submitted to the GVRD in 2013 had the Metro Vancouver population projection for Burnaby at 277,000 by 2021 and Burnaby’s population projection at 270,000 while actual population count from StatsCan puts the number at 249,125. Metro Vancouver suggested that Burnaby increase its population projection from 270,000 to 277,000 even though population was merely based on projections without a means to ensure its total accuracy. To understand how these projections for growth were made, and why the region wanted the City of Burnaby to increase its growth projections, I asked PMV3 in an interview who revealed that:

Those projections were done in 2010 and four years later we’re not in 2021 yet we’re in 2014. A new council comes in and they have a different priority such as not wanting to approve as many towers, and so on. And that’s why you see those discrepancies between what happened and what was projected. Now if you consider how many people are coming into the region, regardless of where they go in the region, our projections have been extraordinarily accurate. That’s because there’s no political aspirations in those projections, those are just raw numbers of intra and interprovincial migration and immigration into the region. When those local aspirations are removed, we can project with some significant accuracy and precision. Where the precision and accuracy begin to decline is when we get into the local level because they each (government) have their own desires and priorities.

The focus on the discrepancies between the actual and projected population for Burnaby is important as it highlights the priorities of the planners and politicians involved. So, a more pro growth-oriented city could project for a higher population and intensify development patterns to accommodate the growth as seems to be the Burnaby case. The region's concern is that growth occurs within the region regardless of the location. PMV1 from Metro Vancouver on the City of Burnaby updating their growth projections for the RCS revealed:

Part of that process 10-15 years ago to develop the Metro 2040 document was looking at setting some targets for both urban centers as well as for a Frequent Transit Development Areas which took a while to get full updates. And those targets as you saw on the strategy are region-wide, they say x amount of growth ought to go within an urban center. It doesn't say, more should go in the Metrotown or another municipal center per se. There are some urban centers that are much more modest in size in different parts of the region that are not necessarily intended for as much growth. Whereas Metrotown's deeper history and the SkyTrain coming here in 1986 was certainly spurring some of the growth and interest at that time.

The growth that comes into the region is to be shared by the municipalities with the regional city centres accommodating a lion share of that growth. Although some areas such as Metrotown have a long history of being more growth-oriented and greatly facilitating this process. The data from the tables analyzed above have shown that the growth pattern of Metrotown and the City of Burnaby seems in line with the regional aspirations.

Table 4.4. Statistical Indicators of Increased density at MetroVancouver

Metro Vancouver	2006	2011	2016	2021	(%) Growth 2006-2011	(%) Growth 2011-2016	(%) Growth 2016-2021
Population	2,116,581	2,313,328	2,463,431	2,642,825	9.3%	6.5%	7.3%
Population density (sq/km)	735.6	802.5	854.6	918	9.1%	6.5%	7.4%
Land Area (hectares)	287,736	288,255	288,268	287,893	0.2%	0.004%	-0.1%
Population Density (population/land area)	7.36	8.03	8.55	9.18	9.1%	6.5%	7.4%
Total Dwellings	870,992	949,565	1,027,613	1,104,532	9%	8.2%	7.5%
Dwelling density (dwellings/land area)	3	3.29	3.56	3.84	9.7%	8.21%	7.87%
Apartments in buildings more than 5 storeys	103,788.21	129,255	160,060	197,280	24.5%	23.8%	23.2%
Employment	1,169,725	1,273,335	1,355,520	1,468,220	8.9%	6.5%	8.3%
Employment density (jobs/land area)	4	4	5	5	0%	25%	0%

Data retrieved from Statistics Canada. 2006. 2011. 2016. 2021

The population density increases for Metro Vancouver between 2006-2011 was at its highest at 9.1%, this value fell to 6.5% between 2011-2016 and rebounded to 7.4% between 2016-2021. The dwelling density increase between 2006-2011 stood at 9.7% and fell slightly to 8.21% between 2011-2016 probably due to an increase in land area from 2006-2016. The dwelling density was at its lowest value of 7.87% between 2016-2021 despite the slight reduction in land area. Employment density had no percent increase between 2006-2011 and had a 25% growth between 2011-2016, before reverting down to zero percent between 2016-2021. The densities for Metro Vancouver also include other municipalities and areas that make up Metro Vancouver. Therefore, my research is focused on the premise that growth occurs in the region and not necessarily the explanations for changes in growth value.

On the 18th of November 2014, Derek Corrigan emerged as the Mayor of Burnaby with 28,113 votes to cling to first position. (City of Burnaby Council Report, November 2014 retrieved from Heritage Burnaby). An article from the Canadian Press on July 2016 remarked how a group of individuals were arrested in their apartments by RCMP officers for protesting the demovictions (Canadian Press 2016). To increase the density at Metrotown the City under the Corrigan administration opted to demolish older buildings and apartments. This led to wide scale protests not only at Metrotown where these demovictions were slated to occur but to other parts of the City of Burnaby.

. On the 24th of October 2018, Mike Hurley emerged as the winner of the Burnaby Mayoral election defeating incumbent Derek Corrigan with 26,260 votes (Council Report, October 2018). After 16 years of serving as Mayor of Burnaby, Derek Corrigan made way for Mike Hurley to become the new Mayor of the City. Many would attribute the ousting of Derek Corrigan at the polls to his administrations management of the demoviction crises that ensued around that period. On November 20th, 2018, the City of Burnaby requested that the GVRD accept its 2013 Regional Context Statement (RCS) for the required 5-year review (Metro Vancouver Regional District January 2019, p.36). The five-year review by Metro Vancouver was to see how the City of Burnaby had fared so far on the earlier recommendations. The next section highlights the key events surrounding housing affordability in Metrotown.

4.3. Housing Affordability in Metrotown

This section looks at the narratives of housing affordability in the Metrotown area. It is important to include the housing affordability story in this timeline of events to portray how regional aspirations lay influence on municipal development. The influence of regional planning on municipal development is a key theme of this research. Therefore, analyzing what the City of Burnaby had to gain and lose in the intersection of regional ambitions are portrayed in this section.

Following the successful election of Mayor Mike Hurley in the 2018 elections, a taskforce on affordable housing was immediately set up with initial meetings in February of 2019 and a final report on July 2019 (City of Burnaby 2019). The affordable housing taskforce was established by the Hurley administration to address the demonstrations against building demovictions in the Metrotown area (Cheung 2019). Tensions arose and residents were eager for an end to be put to the planned demovictions hence the new Mayor's swift response in setting up a taskforce to curtail the issues. A Council Report on 9th of March 2020 with the subject: Finalized Rental Use Zoning Policy which supports the construction of new and replacement units for the City towards increasing the rental housing stock and addresses affordability issues (Council Report, 2020).

This Rental Use Zoning Policy was the city's move to ensure that the construction of new rental units would not displace the current renters of the building. An Interview with Johannes Schumann from the City of Burnaby reveals:

We had a rental use zoning policy in process at the time but due to some political positions on our role in providing affordable housing it wasn't really brought forward. With the advancement of our new mayor in 2018, we brought forward the rental use zoning policy. This basically required developers to replace the number of rental units on that site at the same rents prior to development, as well as institute a tenant assistance policy to house tenants in an interim basis and move them into the development area. What we found is that these areas of either formerly industrial, commercial, or rental were the ones that developed first. And that ultimately while it sees growth in the RGS, results in displacement of rental tenants, and on an unaffordable basis sees displacement of older businesses.

The Director of Planning and Building proposed to council a "density transfer policy for sites subject to rental use zoning" (Council Report 2021, p.1). A report was made on the 26th of May and the meeting was held on the 31st of May 2021. This

housing policy according to Lee-Ann Garnett with the City of Burnaby has the capacity to address some of the housing issues within the City, in her remark:

When you have housing growth, you can use that opportunity to support affordability. It's not just the market building more housing that has not gotten us to affordability. But now we have the private sector market building condos, and if we say to them, as part of that development we want 20% to be affordable; then we create an opportunity for people to have affordable rental. And, we also say, part of your development, you must give us density bonus. And we take 20% of that density bonus. We put it in our housing fund to invest in more affordable housing in Burnaby and that's much deeper affordability than what we get from the 20% inclusionary policy. We get housing two ways.

This housing policy ensures that a tenant in a building with more than five stories that gets demolished for a new project, would be entitled to another apartment with similar rent levels as the previous one (Condon 2019). According to Lee-Ann Garnett the City of Burnaby seems to use the same increase in density (bonus) that caused the demoviction crisis in 2017/2018 to provide housing affordability. But does adding more density through the density bonusing program address housing affordability, especially in the long run? This approach seems to address the housing affordability issues in a manner that quells tensions from residents and achieve a bit of social justice by providing alternatives. My research has also questioned the capacity of regional planning in addressing complex issues like housing affordability by increasing density.

Between 2009 and 2019 Burnaby lost about 1,136 rental housing units according to the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation (Cheung 2021). Much of this changed with the ousting of then Mayor Derek Corrigan who supported massive demovictions, as the incumbent Mayor Mike Hurley sought to develop policies to prevent and protect renters. The City of Burnaby opts to add more density and achieve more housing units to address their affordability issues as Lee-Ann Garnett points out in her earlier commentary. But according to Derek Corrigan the former Burnaby mayor, he does not think such approach is sustainable in the long run, in his words:

What they're doing now is by taking bonus density, which is adding more density onto the density that you've already stipulated and using that to provide rental housing or to provide social housing. And that I believe is a damaging policy, I don't think it is going to be successful in the long run. And I think what they're giving up in providing the amenities that people require is going to be even more damaging in the long run. By the municipalities not doing their job and providing amenities but doing

the provincial and federal government's job by trying to achieve rental housing and social housing is a loss for everyone.

The City of Burnaby gets affordable housing in two ways – the density bonusing, and the inclusionary zoning requirement method, but former mayor Derek Corrigan feels that this method hampers social amenities provision. Whether you side with Derek Corrigan's claims or not my research has shown that higher bodies of government (provincial and federal) can step in to actualize regional planning strategies. According to Frisken:

A parent government may, of course, decide to ignore regional problems altogether if it is not convinced that there is anything to be gained by addressing them. Alternatively, it may deal with them incrementally by creating special purpose authorities with narrowly defined responsibilities or by assuming some responsibilities itself (Frisken 2001 p.516).

Parent government in this case refers to the provincial governments who birth the regional districts and legislate mandates to the regional body. Frisken (2001) also describes how provincial intervention aided in providing more subsidized rental housing for the Metro Toronto area including the creation and empowerment of the Ontario Housing Corporation to build more public housing in suburbs. The higher levels of government (especially provincial) could play a greater role in realizing some of the aspirations of the region. After the debacles of the planned demovictions, the change in municipal leadership and the implementation of a new rental zoning policy seemed to place Burnaby on a good trajectory towards housing affordability.

Presently, the City of Burnaby has over 10,000 rental units planned with majority of them below market housing, and an inclusionary zoning policy that ensures that 20 percent of units with projects above 6 units are affordable (Gold 2022). This accomplishment is in contrast to the over 1000 units that were lost between 2009 and 2019 when the City was deeply under the Derek Corrigan administration (Gold 2022). Most of these lost units could be the result of the planned demovictions and the non-willingness of developers to commit to projects prior to the implementation of the Metrotown plan 2017. In an exclusive interview with *The Globe and Mail*, the Mayor Mike Hurley remarked that the city's four town centres had been groomed long ago for high density developments, which the City intends to operate in a compact manner (Gold 2022). He suggests that inclusionary zoning has been totally embraced in the city despite resistance by developers, as everyone complies with what the City wants.

Inclusionary zoning is the tool the city decided to engage with to ensure that new developments do not displace old renters and residents within the development area.

But despite these policies, the City still worries about the ability to provide more social housing that is affordable. The mayor further stated that, “part of the problem, was the lack of funding from other levels of government for the social housing the City wants to build on designated City-owned land, “that program is moving far too slowly, he said” (Gold 2022). According to Mayor Hurley, the only way such housing program would be a success is to have other levels of government (federal and provincial) step in with financial aid (Gold 2022). This commentary by the mayor is interesting in the fact that the previous Mayor Corrigan also made similar demands for the federal and provincial governments to assist with the housing needs of the City. Therefore, rather than the federal and provincial governments contributing to support housing affordability, they could take up the responsibility and then let the municipalities contribute to support housing affordability.

An example of where such an inclusionary zoning project is showing some signs of success within the City is the six-tower proposal by Grosvenor developers at Brentwood (Gold 2022). The 7.9-acre site includes about 2,000 market rate rental units and 450 below-market units, as well as 900 condo units and a new \$140-million community centre (Gold 2022). Although the market still determines a huge share of the prices for the rental units, the inclusionary zoning policy ensures that a fair share of the units is not exactly determined by market forces.

But not everyone thinks that inclusionary zoning is a viable option for addressing housing shortages especially from a developer’s perspective. In fact, Victoria developer Luke Mari suggested that there’s a lot of buzz around Burnaby’s unfolding rental, but inclusionary zoning only works when a developer can build enough density to make the project viable (Gold 2022). That is to say that such a policy would best function for big projects where enough density is already required for the development, then a fraction of the development can be zoned out for affordable housing. But providing further clarification as to why Burnaby’s inclusionary zoning policy works well, Lee-Ann Garnett reports that:

Other cities have an inclusionary requirement. Richmond, Coquitlam, Vancouver, all our neighbors have the same 20% for affordable housing,

or they have some requirement. It might be 15% or 10% they adjust the percent, but developers have to do that in other places. And they also must pay community contributions in other places. I guess our rental zoning has more detail that makes us unique, we also have the most robust tenant assistance policy, but other places have them too. Although developers often say that Burnaby is a little more onerous, they know that they can build more. There's a lot going on here, their development approval process is faster, all these other things make them want to develop here.

The City of Burnaby's inclusionary requirement policy for zoning is attractive for developers compared to the rest of cities across the Metro Vancouver region. And the City of Burnaby is getting more rentals due to its easy development process and the promises of inclusionary zoning despite the burden of what it costs to the developers. Johannes Schumann a planner for Burnaby agrees about the costs of the inclusionary zoning policy for developers but argues that it serves the greater good for all. In his words:

Well, there's still a cost related to the development for the developer. And it's manageable so far as they can produce. They just put it into their profile analysis, and we've seen a very quick turnover that now this is like a standard course of business for development internally. And nobody has really questioned that too much as it has resulted in going from a net loss of affordable housing and rental uses in Burnaby, to not just a net gain but the greatest capacity for broken affordable housing of any other municipality in the City, based on this one policy position. And it makes a difference, and it also goes back down to the point I made about planners and planning being facilitators, rather than just regulators.

From this standpoint, it could be wrong to fault the City's approach to creating more affordable housing, especially when it seems to be providing the required results. But taking people out of their units for redevelopment also creates mixed feelings and raises tensions. Burnaby residents cannot be blamed for expressing such displeasure, as just a few years back in 2017, the process was carried out without a deep consideration of the impacts to the affected residents. When asked about the reactions from possible residents who may be victims of the replacement housing unit program Johannes Schumann remarked:

I know there's still a lot of concern amongst existing residents, but with the development of these replacement housing units, and hopefully their early occupancy. We're hoping to win over those residents to realize that this has been to their benefit more than anybody else that we're doing this for the residents of Burnaby and not for the developers.

But to address the point made by Mr Mari above on the cost of developments to developers particularly when it comes to density, the inclusionary policy would depend on the municipal processes involved. To this effect, Johannes Schumann from the City of Burnaby when asked on how the RGS enables Metrotown and Burnaby to be an attractive place for investments and businesses stated:

Property tax rates in Burnaby for both residential and commercial are less than they are in the City of Vancouver. The overall project costs our construction costs are equivalent, sales figures are slightly reduced. If you're looking at downtown Vancouver, you might have a \$2,000 per square foot saleable value whereas Metrotown you might see anywhere between \$1100 to \$1400 dollars per square foot. There is a bit of a reduction in income but with the ease of processing, we have a perspective when it comes to development in Burnaby. In so far as you meet all the policies, we take in a development application with the intent of approving it. Which is quite different from other municipalities that may take a more regulatory function because maybe they don't want to be seen as, quote unquote pro development.

The process of taking in development applications with the intent of approving them makes the City of Burnaby stand out from the rest of the municipalities within the Metro Vancouver region. This approach could explain why the inclusionary zoning policy may work for Burnaby and not elsewhere within the Metro Vancouver region. Following the aspirations outlined by the region via the RGS enables the City of Burnaby increase its density by accepting more development applications. But the point is, even for municipalities within the Metro Vancouver region that take the same approach they could most likely end up with a different result. This insight also highlights the importance of the mobilities approach as (Peck 2013) suggests in telling the tales not only about successes but also about the failures of policies as they migrate. According to Johannes Schumann with the City of Burnaby he states that:

What we look at is if you create a land use plan, the intent is to see development in accordance with that plan. In Burnaby, we have built sort of this reputation of being able to move projects through in a timely manner with a clarity that other municipalities don't have. We've taken that to heart and try to promote development in Metrotown.

The City of Burnaby would appear to stand out from the rest of the municipalities across Metro Vancouver due to its desire to promote development particularly around Metrotown, its core urban centre. The decision to approve more developments and support more density is to be in line with Metro Vancouver's aspiration for regional city centres like Metrotown. According to Derek Corrigan, the former Mayor of Burnaby:

We're now in a situation where people are saying, No don't build recreation centers, don't build the swimming pools, don't build the libraries, put that money into achieving rental housing or achieving affordable housing for people of a lower economic means. And you're shifting that money now into achieving low-cost housing, and that's to the damage of the community that's a loss to the community. The provincial and federal government love the idea that it's the municipalities who are financing rental and affordable housing. That it's not something they have to do, or if they do it, they do it in a contribution sense they don't take responsibility for it.

According to the former mayor Derek Corrigan the City of Burnaby faces an opportunity cost between getting more housing units and providing the social amenities required to support the density. But the City planners interviewed in this research would disagree and state that Burnaby does not only get affordable housing but receives enough funding from developers to provide amenities. According to Frisken (2001) the most politically contentious issue for regional governance has always been deciding who bears the cost of the services mainly because of the implications that cost allocation has for various local residents and governments. But, rather than putting all the pressure on density to support housing affordability, the provincial and federal government could do more than contribute to the abatement of the crisis.

This chapter has examined the long history of regional planning to determine the role that regional planning plays in increasing density at the Metrotown centre and the City of Burnaby. The mobilities framework has demonstrated the importance of tracing key events that occur for the relationship that exists between Metro Vancouver and the municipalities. The relationship is based on a governance approach of consensus-building that ensures that regional aspirations are achieved successfully. The housing affordability section 4.3 has highlighted how the City of Burnaby has continually pursued development in line with the regional aspirations for more density. From the analysis of this chapter, the means for understanding how regional goals are integrated and balanced against municipal capacity was established. However, a consequence of the pursuit of growth in line with regional aspirations was a demoviction crisis and protests. The new inclusionary zoning adopted by the present City government highlights the urge to address a housing problem that has continually plagued developments. The tenancy assistance policy, despite the concerns by the residents, aid the residents during the period of redevelopment of structures and avoids the crisis that ensued a few years back. Although there is a worry for the sustained enactment of this policy in the long run

if higher levels of government (Federal and Provincial) do not take up more responsibility.

The following chapter examines the link between regional and municipal planning by examining key documents that ensure that municipal and regional planning occur in tandem. The importance of the governance model in achieving consensus for city-region planning and development is examined in the next chapter. The chapter concludes by examining the consequences of increased density for the Metrotown area which is a vital component of my research question. This consequence points to an example of the kinds of outcomes that could accompany the intersection between municipal and regional planning.

Chapter 5. The intersection between Regional and Municipal Planning

After examining the long history of roles that regional planning has had for the direction of municipal planning it is important to note the exact tools and mechanisms that make such influence possible. This section examines the merits of a governance structure put in place by Metro Vancouver in building the relationship between regional and municipal planning. Furthermore, this chapter builds on the role of the 2011 RGS in ensuring that municipal plans conform to the regional objectives using the Context statements as the tool for alignment. This section concludes by exploring the consequence of increased density onto the Metrotown area that occurred a few years back.

The aim of a good regional plan is primarily to integrate growth that occurs at every corner within the region (LMRPB 1952). The successful integration of growth would then be dependent on the relationships between the regional and municipal planning authorities. Besides most metropolitan problems are solved by networks of coordination and cooperation between municipalities and government agencies (Heinelt and Kübler 2005). PMV2 from Metro Vancouver in their remarks on the benefits of having an integration between municipal and regional planning efforts:

The greatest benefit is this coordinating component on regional issues like, highways and transit. The SkyTrain doesn't just stop at the Vancouver boundary and end, and then some other service picks up in Burnaby. We need to coordinate this big infrastructure investment, and direct growth to support that investment across many municipal boundaries. The RGS strives to play that coordinating component to assist municipalities, ensure that we as a region, not regional government but a collective region, we've made these investments, and require ROI on these investments. We can help municipalities, through information sharing, through data and research along with a policy framework, i.e. the RGS to get that our ROI on the various investments in a coordinated efficient fashion.

The region's aim is to ensure that coordination occurs between the various municipalities and the regional board, to ensure that the region obtains economic benefits from investment infrastructures. This regional effort seems unsurprising as earlier explored in Chapter 2 of this paper, regional efforts seem to be primarily interested in economic prosperity. The role of the region therefore is to act as a significant space for organizing

economic governance that ultimately ensures that economic development is achieved using tools like policy sharing and knowledge. (Lovering 1999; Gordon 2001). Now, whether for economic prosperity or otherwise, the requirement for coordination among municipalities is a vital way of manifesting the influence of the region towards local development.

According to Lee-Ann Garnett with the City of Burnaby on the importance of collaboration between planners at the city level and those at the regional level:

I worked at Metro Vancouver for eight years before this job, and I wrote that regional growth strategy. I wrote all the content about urban centers frequent transit development areas, and I know it really well. And from a regional point of view, the regional plan is written by the cities and the region together. It's a collaborative thing. City planners take years developing all the policies, and for the most part, it really reflects the collective desires of the local governments, and what the region wants. And because the planners in each City had the opportunity to shape it, they shape it in a way that they know that their City can participate and be able to be a good regional partner. And there's a lot of back and forth, before the plans are done, but generally most municipalities know that those are the correct planning principles and directions that my City can support.

Based on the comment above, municipal planners from each city get a chance to give their inputs and shape the regional plans to avoid major disagreements and enhance the governance model of regional planning. And working under the same regional jurisdiction and on the same plan together would foster relationship building amongst the actors involved. Some of the planners involved in the RGS in 2011 and broadly in regional planning for Metro Vancouver had also previously worked in the city and vice versa. The length of time taken to develop regional plans and strategies is also reflective of the desire to come up with policies that will easily be accepted by all parties involved.

According to Arndt et al (2000) for regional planning under the governance model to be successful it must be done in a way that networking is given priority over individual interests. And according to the authors, the actors involved in this process include the towns, local municipality, and regional government. The concept of networking for planning development under new regionalism is vital for the success of planning. But there is also the question of whose interests are best served when using increased density to transform urban landscapes? According to Charmes and Keil (2015), the

need to intensify and densify suburban areas serves the interest of those that are affluent while at the same time displacing lower income residents. The authors further argue in their article that:

The success of the themes of densification and of the battle against urban sprawl should also be related to the fact that those themes converged with the interests of urban planners (under the buzzwords of growth control), politicians in core urban areas (who welcome new residents and activities) and developers (who can exploit the rent gap, new opportunities, etc.). (Charmes and Keil 2015, p.4)

The concepts around densification of core urban areas (compact developments) are primarily in opposition to sprawl. This is because sprawling developments are often at lower densities and with lower capacity to attract people, jobs, and investments. Due to the attractiveness of compact development, it tends to serve the interests of the more affluent in the society. Several well-off groups may be opposed to having more density in their neighbourhoods. Increasing density in a compact urban form can be problematic for planning developments as my research has examined, due to the difficulty in the measurement of density (Tsai 2005). According to Derek Corrigan in an interview:

You know in essence, the most critical element out of this picture is we're now trying to fix a problem that's been going on for 25 years. And we're trying to use density as being the solution to that problem when it never was. And it never could be, it is never capable of being able to achieve that kind of equitable housing, that is expected. The only equity that's achieved out of that kind of housing is achieving more actual units of housing. That's the only equity that's being achieved, you're getting more units. And supply and demand are the only thing that is achieved out of additional density.

The municipalities and the region are in a dilemma particularly as it relates to supplying affordable housing. And according to Derek Corrigan a former Mayor of Burnaby who has had a long history with working alongside the regional authority and the municipality, the most attractive solution to this problem is reverting to density. From the above statement the only equity that results from using density to support housing affordability is getting more units. The next section highlights the merits of having the governance structure in Metro Vancouver's planning approach.

5.1. The merits of the governance structure of Metro Vancouver

From initial analysis in my research, having an adequate governance structure in place such as in Metro Vancouver, aids in the actualization of regional aspirations. The governance model as I have explored in this paper enables consensus building, cooperation, easy movement of policies, and the goal of economic development. Most importantly it helps in addressing larger issues that cannot easily be addressed by a single municipality. New regionalism or “new metropolitan governance” as Heinelt and Kubler (2005) refer to it is concerned with achieving good governance that emanates from series of deliberations and cooperation towards a collective goal. It is also built on the networking between non-governmental actors which increases its ‘citizen’s participation and influence levels’ (Heinelt and Kubler 2005, p.15). According to PMV1 a planner from Metro Vancouver on the merits of the planning structure of the region:

Metro Vancouver or GVRD was created because regionally significant matters are best addressed or efficiently addressed in a regional level. Whether it’s sewage or water service that happens because of geography, and catchment areas or its flood prevention from the great flood of 1948, or the one of 2021. And you can compare or contrast our region to Calgary Edmonton where it is one City there, the region and the Cities of Calgary and Edmonton are virtually the same thing except for some lands on the perimeter that they annex from time to time. Whereas here for historical political reasons we do not have one municipality.

The essence of having Metropolitan governance is to address regional issues that would be too difficult to be addressed locally. The governance approach ensures consensus building and partnership among the actors involved. Building good relationships at all levels is required for having effective outputs from plans and policies affecting a region. According to PMV2 a planner at Metro Vancouver on the importance of building relationships between the regional authorities and the municipalities over the years and effects of the 2014 plebiscite on TransLink’s governing practice:

What has happened at both TransLink and Metro Vancouver in the last seven years or so has been I emphasizing on partnership and recognizing that the regional agency cannot implement by itself. TransLink has a partner planning team that is really working hard to build relationships with municipalities. Metro Vancouver does the same thing in trying to have a close, regular check-in with all the planners and the municipalities and provide a service to them. That way when there

is a problem, we have a foundation of a good relationship to start from. It hasn't always been that way, and I think about what it was like during the referendum in 2014. I was working at TransLink at the time and the relationship between TransLink and the municipalities was not as strong.

From the comment above, this relationship is not only exclusive to the regional planning authority and the City planning departments but also the regional transportation authority TransLink. TransLink, the regional transportation authority had to restructure its practices to improve the authority's relationship with the cities and aid in achieving the growth strategies. During an interview with TransLink's director of systemic planning Matt Craig on TransLink's role in ensuring the relationship between the municipalities and region is fostered through transit:

TransLink's role is directly in our legislative mandate, we're responsible for the regional transportation system. We are legislatively mandated for that transportation system to support the regional growth strategy. By Metrotown regional city center being designated in the RGS, it means we are required to support that development and all the policies and actions that are in that regional growth strategy in focusing growth into urban centers, FTDA's, and the connectivity between those. TransLink's role is to plan and manage and invest in the transportation corridor.

The role of TransLink as the regional transportation body is to support the municipalities in accommodating and attracting the growth enshrined in the RGS by aiding connectivity at urban centres such as Metrotown. Of course, the intensification effort would vary dependent on the designation of the individual urban centre on a regional lens like the Metrotown which is a regional city centre. After all, the compact city should be supported by "multimodal transportation facilities, including a system oriented toward public transit, road network, cycling, and pedestrians". (Pradhan 2017, p.43). And since the RGS supports a compact form of urban development, there is an obvious role for TransLink being the regional authority for transportation in pushing the aspirations of the region onto municipal town centre development.

5.2. How the 2011 RGS acts as a connective between Regional and Municipal Planning efforts in Metro Vancouver

Regional planning historically has always outlined how developments should occur in municipalities and towns within a region, and the governance structure of the RGS ensures that the regional-municipal relations contain coordination and

collaboration. Although both the LRSP of 1996 and the 2011 RGS are considered growth strategies, the RGS differs in that it contains tools for ensuring conformity. When the LRSP was implemented in 1996, there was no OCP for the City of Burnaby which came into effect for the first time in 1998 before being revised in 2014. This realization makes the 2011 RGS an important document to analyze for understanding the deep relations between regional planning efforts and municipal development.



Figure 5.1. Examining the relationship between Regional and Municipal planning via key documents.

Image retrieved from Metro Vancouver (2020) P.58.

The RGS sits at the top of the image in Figure 5.1 and sets out the direction that other municipal plans and bylaws conform to, and then the specific zoning bylaws are at the bottom. But from Figure 5.1 above, the relationship between the regional documents and the City plans are not hierarchal as a typical top-down model would suggest. The

arrows that link the respective plans go both ways to signify the back-and-forth relationship that is required for successful implementation of all documents. The relationship between these set of documents highlight the role regional planning plays in municipal planning and development central to my research. During an interview on consensus building Metro Vancouver's PMV3 revealed that:

It's a delicate high wire balancing act. The Local Government Act is written in this consensus model scenario. It's not entirely enforced by the region because we can't enforce it. Our tools for alignment, are the Regional Context Statements as you've mentioned earlier in your questions. And that's the tool for alignment. But do we have Official Community Plan police running around making sure things are achieved? No. And the important part here is, it's a model of consensus, and that's what's been worked on for over a couple decades since the legislation was changed, I think that happened in the 1980s.

Although municipalities within Metro Vancouver are expected to align their plans and goals with the RGS, there is no tool to ensure enforcement and total compliance with the strategies. The Regional Context Statement is the major tool the region can use to check if the various municipalities within the region adjust their community plans to the desire of the RGS. The decision of not enforcing the strategies towards municipalities could be to maintain good relationships between the cities and the region and to foster the existing cooperation under the governance model.

Moreover, approaches to regional planning certainly differs across various places, as some examples were indicated to earlier in this paper. In Ontario for example the Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) gives policy direction on issues relating to land use development and planning (Ontario 2020, p.1). The PPS also focuses growth and development within urban and rural settlement areas while supporting viability of rural areas. To protect provincial interest, official plans should conform with the PPS, just as Provincial plans such as Green Belt plan are formed under the foundation of the PPS (Ontario 2020, p.1). The Planning Act requires that municipalities revise their official plan to ensure that it conforms to provincial plans, and these provincially legislated requirements are satisfied through a Growth Plan conformity exercise and Municipal Comprehensive Review (MCR) (Toronto 2020, p.1). In places like California in the U.S, the state law requires each City and county to adopt a general plan, which are seen as the charter to which zoning ordinances must conform including specific plans (California OPR 2020). Although coordination and cooperation are encouraged for cities and

counties to avoid conflicts, the full adoption of the general plan is not required, as cities and counties can decide to adopt parts of the plan most suitable to their immediate needs (California OPR 2020, p.24). In both cases, the provincial/state governments play a more active role in determining the structure and compliance levels with long-range plans for individual cities and towns. And in B.C the provincial government over the years has ensured that the regional growth strategies have been adopted by local areas.

5.3. A Negative Outcome of increased density for the Metrotown area

Just as I introduced in the previous chapter looking at the historical timeline of planning in the region, the major outcome for the City of Burnaby's attempt to increase density into Metrotown resulted in city-wide protests. The STOP DEMOVICTIONS protest that rocked major parts of the City particularly in 2016 was attributed to how Metrotown residents sought to be protected from massive demovictions and displacements (Deutsch 2016). In an interview with the former mayor Derek Corrigan for my research on why the City felt the need to follow such a direction he says:

The reality is in Metrotown the buildings have mainly been built in the 1950s, 1960s some into the early 70s. Those buildings had been wood construction very cheap housing, and not long-term housing. And the first time I moved into Burnaby I lived on Wilson Street in Metrotown in one of the apartments that's still standing there. That would be 45 years ago, and it was old and decrepit when I moved in. Those buildings were well beyond their usable life. Most of them have faulty electrical systems bad plumbing. The reason they're very cheap, is because people do nothing about them, they haven't been maintaining them. They know that eventually those buildings are going to be torn down. They're not investing in those buildings and maintaining those buildings.

Not to question the validity of replacing old buildings, but a lesson can be learnt from what occurred in adjacent Vancouver, a few decades prior to the demoviction crisis. Harcourt and Cameron's *City Making in Paradise* tells the tale of how two young women, Shirley Chan a Chinese Canadian, and Darlene Marzari resisted the City of Vancouver's urge to create a freeway that would displace thousands of Strathcona residents. Residential rehabilitation first of its kind in Canada was spearheaded by the City of Vancouver for Strathcona in 1969 and the funds for demolition were put forward towards fixing the old buildings rather than demolition under "Urban renewal" (Harcourt and Cameron 2007, p.49). Their acts would not only save Strathcona but neighbouring

Chinatown and set the pinnacle of livability that is ascribed to Vancouver and indeed Greater Vancouver world-wide (Harcourt and Cameron 2007).

The demoviction protests intensified, and the City tried to quell the unrest, via the Burnaby housing profile which was not enough to end the demonstrations (Deutsch 2016). The then Mayor Derek Corrigan also maintained that it was unrealistic to provide a moratorium for demolitions and zoning applications (Deutsch 2016). He further added that the City of Burnaby intended to create the appropriate density which unfortunately would be unaffordable for low-income earners. In an interview with Derek Corrigan for my research he remarked on the boxed in situation that unfortunately required action regardless of the outcome:

How can I as a municipal politician say stop any density, because that'll fix this. How can it? How can refusing to provide any more supply solve the problem of lack of housing, and more people coming? It doesn't. What you're put up against is a situation that's been created by somebody else. The provincial and federal government have created a situation where there isn't enough affordable social housing in our communities. But at the same time, you have to build more housing and create more density in order to deliver for the people who are coming into the region. Now that is a rock in a hard place. There is no magical solution to get out of that.

It may seem logical and the only viable option to add more density if more growth and people are coming into the area. But the major issue for my research has always been understanding the consequences increasing density within communities of vulnerable populations. Therefore, the solution may not be as simple as halting the influx of people or stopping density but understanding the realities that an increase in density may not solve the housing crisis in an equitable manner. According to Frisken (2001):

More recently, proponents of change have also focused on the need for policies (like region-wide tax base or revenue sharing, fair share housing, and improved city-suburban transit links) to counter or avoid the negative consequences of metropolitan expansion for individual cities or the less advanced residents (Frisken 2001, p.516)

It could be this need for revamped policies that gave rise to the inclusionary zoning program and the tenant assistance policy the City used to quell the demoviction protests. Density is essential for understanding the "power relations that exists in cities" and how it could favour some interests while being disadvantageous to others particularly between local and metropolitan interests (Charmes and Keil 2015, p.11).

Furthermore, Derek Corrigan concluded by calling on the federal and provincial governments to initiate a National Housing Strategy (Deutsch 2016). The former mayor's comments could be indicative of the City's struggle to maintain its local goals on development while still in pursuit of regional expectations which is a central part of my paper. Understanding how municipal governments deal with the pressures of handling growth and development which the region requires is necessary. In this case, the City of Burnaby under former Mayor Corrigan decided to increase density at the Metrotown regional city centre area by displacing low-middle income residents. In an interview with the former mayor of Burnaby Derek Corrigan on his reflections on following the regional plans for growth and increased density and its consequences for Metrotown and his political career:

What I did is what I should have done. I listened to our planners, I listened to the regional planners, I respected the expertise of people who were educated in this area, and who had a broad objective view of where our society was going and should go to accommodate the density and the environmental issues that we were facing. I listened to them, and implemented those policies in the best regional interest, and that's why we were able to achieve that consensus. This idea that we had that density as some kind of reward for us. No, it wasn't. The density was our acceptance of the responsibility of more people coming into the lower mainland. And the only reward we got was better transportation.

From analysis of the regional plans and directives from the previous chapter, it has always been the region's desire for immense amount of growth to be directed towards regional city centres such as Metrotown. A way for the municipality of Burnaby to respond to the regional desire of more growth was to increase density to answer a key question posed in my research. The attempt to balance the aspiration of the region and that of the City of Burnaby through densifying Metrotown amongst various others brought about the negative outcome of the demoviction crisis and protests. So, while the City of Burnaby got more growth, it also resulted in the demovictions. According to Lee-Ann Garnett with the City of Burnaby's planning department on the housing affordability crisis and its ties to increased density:

In the 80s and 90s, we had mostly single-family homes, where the only option was to buy a home or buy an apartment. Well, that didn't prove to really address any affordability. We thought if we add more density it's going to make it more affordable, but it never really worked. And in fact, we continued to follow the regional plan, we did not have a plan to take care of people when we were redeveloping their housing. And that's

why we had the demoviction protests. We took the pause, and we created the new rental resilient policy and policy tenant assistant plan.

Just as I observed at the end of Chapter 2, that following the regional plans and the RGS can prove beneficial to being a “posterchild” for the region and case study for others to follow. But exclusively following the regional plans without a contingent plan to address local issues similarly can prove to be problematic. This issue has been at the forefront of my research, that is the desire to balance regional and local planning goals.

Eventually, the Planning and Building Department of the City of Burnaby unveiled the Metrotown Downtown plan in July of 2017. The Metrotown downtown plan is expected to “build on the successes of the 1977 Metrotown plan and ensure that Metrotown attains the status of the downtown of Burnaby” (City of Burnaby 2017, p.6). This plan despite its controversies due to its timing with the demoviction protests was envisioned as a way for Metrotown to be known as the City of Burnaby’s downtown. And it is stated that under this Plan, there are no changes to the established Metrotown boundary as the intent is to contain Metrotown’s development within the established boundaries to achieve a compact Downtown (City of Burnaby 2017, p.12). The reason to focus on Metrotown in my research as opposed to other town centres within the City of Burnaby - Lougheed, Edmonds and Brentwood - is due to the regional function that Metrotown performs. And my research is concerned with looking at the regional influence hence Metrotown is appropriate as a regional city centre.

A look at the Figures 5.2 and 5.3 below shows that although the plan does indeed contain the development within the City’s boundaries, it does this by further densifying areas around the core of Metrotown. Based on the land use map for this 2017 plan, there are only but a few locations for mid-density developments as most residential areas are slated for high density. Gordon and Richardson (1997) mention that for equity in developments to be achieved, the focus should be at income redistribution and not change in land use and zoning policies. Making an alteration to the land use of Metrotown from its 1977 form to the current form may not ensure that the developments would be equitable. According to Johannes Schumann with the City of Burnaby in an interview he commented:

When the regional growth strategy was adopted, we felt it was necessary in the municipality to elevate Metrotown even further. We brought forward, a revised Metrotown plan. The original Metrotown plan

was adopted in 1977 so in 2017 we brought forward the revised Metrotown plan and designated Metrotown as Burnaby's downtown area, even though we had three other municipal town centers. We wanted to reflect the designation of the RGS as a regional city center by calling Metrotown our downtown and as such we actually gave it a significantly more intensive density than we did other areas of the City. Not necessarily by bylaw but by designation.

The designation of Metrotown as the downtown of Burnaby is in line with the region's desire through the RGS to make Metrotown a regional city centre. This designation act further emphasizes the role of regional planning for municipal direction towards planning. Designating more density for Metrotown by the City of Burnaby, is a way to promote the status of Metrotown in the vision of the entire Metro Vancouver region.



Figure 5.2. Land Use plan for Metrotown in 1977

Retrieved from District of Burnaby 1977 p.45

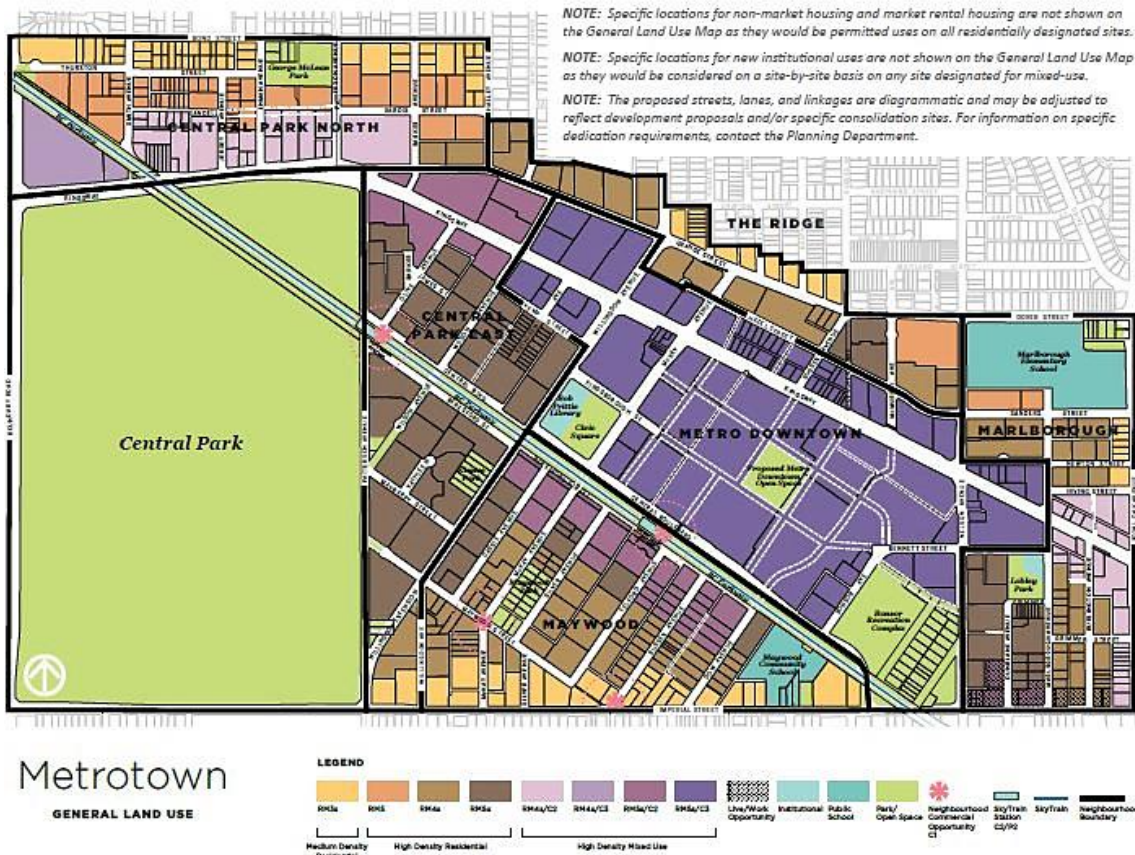


Figure 5.3. Land Use plan for Metrotown downtown plan in 2017.
Retrieved from City of Burnaby 2017 p.37

The information on Table 5.1 below outlines the number of redevelopment applications that were made by developers to the City of Burnaby for projects in Metrotown from 2010 to 2021. Even after the RGS implementation in 2011 the number of applications for redevelopment received was less. A significant year on the table is 2017 which has the highest number of applications with the value of 22. This is because the Metrotown Downtown plan came into effect in 2017, so it would explain why redevelopment applications skyrocketed during this period. A new plan often gives the updated outline of land uses for an area; hence it would make sense for developers to wait and take advantage of development after the specific plan has been implemented. Development applications slowed in 2020 probably due to the global inactivity brought about by the COVID 19 pandemic. Between 2010-2016 is a period where the City experienced the lowest amounts of development applications. Curious to understand the reason for this trend I spoke with Johannes Schumann a City of Burnaby planner in an interview where he revealed that:

So, you know, for example, we had a significant economic downturn in 2007, in which case we saw no rezoning applications no development applications for almost a period of two years; and then subsequently again through the economic impacts of housing affordability in 2017 and 18, and ultimately covid 19 in 2020. We saw significant reduction in the amount of development applications we received so that somehow and somewhat curtails the advancement of development.

Table 5.1. Metrotown rezoning applications

Year of redevelopment application	Number of redevelopment applications
2010	1
2013	1
2015	2
2016	2
2017	22
2018	16
2019	9
2020	2
2021	10
Total Number of redevelopment applications	65

Data for the number of redevelopment applications received for Metrotown area obtained from City of Burnaby Planning and development department records.

The curtailing of development here for the City appears to be incidental and one that is largely dependent on unforeseen circumstances beyond the City’s control. Therefore, development applications could have been higher with the absence of these unpredictable situations, ultimately leading to more development and density within the City particularly at core centres such as Metrotown. This concept is unsurprising as an earlier comment by a City of Burnaby staff revealed that the City of Burnaby takes in application for development with the intention of approving it. And although it might be interesting to compare the redevelopment application data with other cities across Metro Vancouver, access to such data is very challenging. Besides, the 2017 change in Metrotown due to the demoviction crisis is very dramatic and interesting to focus on.

This chapter has looked at the specific ways that regional planning connects with municipal planning and development approach by examining key documents such as the RGS, RCS, and community plans. This connection between the regional and municipal planning through the key documents answers the major question of how regional planning influences municipal planning for developments. The chapter concludes by examining a negative consequence of increase density within Metrotown, which sheds

light on the costs associated with compact developments, and how the City of Burnaby manages regional growth aspirations.

The concluding chapter of my research points at how the governance structure of regional planning within Metro Vancouver enables collaboration amongst municipalities to manage growth in a compact form. This governance approach could address some livability issues but has been found to occur at a cost that seems socially unsustainable in the long run. The summary of my research findings, the limitations, and areas for future research are explored in this final chapter

Chapter 6. Conclusion

The 'top down' approach characteristic of a good many previous attempts has been abandoned in favour of a new idea of the institution, which considers it to be the result of a process that brings into play the ingredients of 'good governance' directed towards achieving a consensus between the principal actors on the 'common' objectives (Metropolitan Government and Governance in Western Countries: A Critical Review, Levêfre, 1998, p.9).

Metropolitan governance has within it the characteristics of cooperation and consolidation among partners to achieve the greatest benefits available. Previous Metropolitan 'government' structures are hierarchical and lack the capacity for coordination and cooperation towards achieving a common goal for a region. The metropolitan governance approach studied in my paper provides the appropriate model for collaboration between the regional and municipal institutions. The success of this governance model carefully characterizes a movement that arose in the early 1990s, that epitomizes the steps required for the economic prosperity of a region. The new regionalism paradigm is primarily concerned with the development of the economy of a region and possibly the urban centres and core cities within them. The focus is to ensure that the influx of population is sustained in these areas by expanding the growth of the economy.

However, the sole focus on economic growth can deflect attention from other issues brought about by the same growth patterns in the area and the region. According to Wheeler (2002, p.271) economic growth is mistrusted in most regions given "its capacity to increase house prices, generate excess vehicle traffic, promote jobs/housing imbalances and lead to other quality of life problems". Being able to manage this growth brought about by this model of consensus building for the greater good of the region, has been the key issue of examination in my paper. The City of Burnaby through its OCP, and Metrotown plans have indicated its desire to collaborate with Metro Vancouver to not only achieve its regional mandate but exceed it. After all one of the policies of the 2011 RGS centers around the following (Metro Vancouver 2020, p.57):

The Regional Growth Strategy has been designed so that the more regionally significant an issue, the higher the degree of Metro Vancouver involvement in decision-making, and conversely, the less regionally significant an issue, the less Metro Vancouver involvement. This approach

is intended to provide checks and balances on land use planning decisions made within Metro Vancouver and member municipalities.

Although it was not my research intention to focus on the politics of multi-level governance amongst actors, my study of Metrotown and the influence by the region does provide a way to try to understand multi-level governance. A way of understanding multi-level governance is by examining the relationship between the regional and local authorities, which my research has done.

My research began by asking the question of how regional planning through the 2011 RGS has played a role in the creation and increase of density for Metrotown. My research further questioned the viability of using density to support housing affordability and the implications for achieving equity. The long history of regional planning's influence has been established in my research as the starting point for understanding the present role that regional planning plays for municipal development. Also, at the forefront of my research is understanding how the City of Burnaby aligns its goals with the aspirations of the Metro Vancouver region. The demoviction crisis that ensued in Metrotown a few years ago is evidence of the difficulty that could arise while trying to align regional and municipal objectives. This challenging situation also highlights the dangers with trying to make density a solution to a problem like affordable housing.

My research has found that although new regionalism operates in an economic development fashion, for as long as the governance approach is pursued it opens the doors for cooperation between municipalities in the same region towards economic competition with other regions and prosperity. I also found that the Metro Vancouver case since its days as the GVRD has operated in a totally distinctive manner worthy of emulation by the rest of the world. In other words, what legitimizes regional planning's influence on municipal development is the idea that the GVRD had created a unique model of regionalism.

Several policies are responsible for how municipalities respond to the desires of the region to accommodate growth. Understanding the mobilities of policies across several jurisdictions and the ease of access is another key component of my research. When policies can be enacted with ease across jurisdictional boundaries due to the governance model of collaboration, then we start to see the aspirations of the region become a reality. Mobility of policies does not only tell the story of what happens to

policies when they move as Eugene McCann rightly points: also important is the transfer of knowledge. When policies move, they are shaped by the social connections that occurs between the actors (McCann 2011). The actors in this case would involve the politicians, planners, stakeholder groups, and all involved in the planning processes.

Also, there is no doubt from the analysis and findings from my research that there is a link between urban core densification in a compact form and sustainability. Of course, when high density is advocated in a compact form it prevents outwards growth and development that could encroach into agricultural lands or protected areas. Compact developments would also prioritize public transit, walking and cycling which then reduce vehicle travel and trips. But sustainability is not only achieved by addressing the environmental and economic components which the cases mentioned earlier are best suited to. The often-overlooked aspect which is the social component should also be addressed for compact developments to fully support sustainability. My research has questioned the capacity of high-density compact developments to address equity which is an important social sustainability indicator according to (Guimarães et.al 2020).

My research is primarily focused on analyzing the influences of regional planning through the 2011 RGS on Metrotown's direction towards increased densification. From the historical analysis of previous regional plans in Chapter 4, the Metro Vancouver region has developed planning, growth, and development strategies that predates the 2011 RGS. Some of these strategies have in them a few key points that characterize the present growth strategy for the region, hence the importance of their analysis in my research. With the introduction of the RCS in 2013, the region now better ensures that planning and development within the municipalities under Metro Vancouver stays aligned with the regional objectives. The Census data has indicated growth in aspects such as population, dwellings, and jobs for the Metrotown, Burnaby and Metro Vancouver region. The City of Burnaby approaches development openly as evident by the number of development applications it receives and approves.

The Burnaby and Metrotown case are unique, but my research is limited in that it does not analyze how developments are undertaken in other municipalities within Metro Vancouver. For example, my research does not document the relationship between the regional planning body and other regional city centres such as Surrey, Coquitlam, or New Westminster. Due to the scope of this research such comparison cannot directly be

made. But for future purposes this research can provide a framework for understanding more broadly the nature of the relationship between municipal and regional planning bodies. My research could also guide planners on the consequences of high density and intensified growth for local areas and residents without having alternatives. It is important to note that the regional body is not an entirely independent entity that legislates to the municipalities. The regions' function and existence especially for the Metro Vancouver context is possible because of the coordination and collaboration between municipalities. The governance model ensures that the voices and ambitions of the municipalities are reflected in the regional plans or growth strategies that they are expected to abide with.

Moreover, my research is also limited in that there are several factors that could foster economic development of a place that may not necessarily relate or involve regional governance. Because of the scale of this research, the primary focus was on the influence of regional planning for municipal development which could also involve economic development. Although my research has not assumed that economic growth and competition must only occur when municipalities collaborate in a governance model. But several growth-oriented policies can transform the economic outlook of an area without the inputs of a collaborative approach that is a feature of new regionalism.

Furthermore, future research on the topic of the role of regional planning for municipal development could include an examination of the possible roles that other forms of government (provincial and federal) could play to achieve more success. From the creation of regional districts in British Columbia down to the assistance in providing funds for transit and other developments, there is an obvious role for the provincial governments to play in supporting good regional governance. Regional districts although formed by provincial governments in the 1950s and 1960s are electoral areas that deliver services to municipalities in a manner at which the districts are programmed for (Harcourt and Cameron 2007). This notion can be attributed to a function of new regionalism which Plüss (2015) describes as functioning through cooperation, flexible networks that define public service delivery. Although my research has called on higher forms of authority particularly the provincial government to step up and take responsibility for provision of amenities like social housing. But it remains a mystery as to how the 'cooperative' features of Metropolitan governance might change with the provincial authority taking up more responsibility.

Regional planning in Metro Vancouver under the governance structure involves the municipalities planning collectively to tackle complex issues that cross municipal boundaries. As my research has shown that using high density to support housing affordability as the City of Burnaby presently follows, always leads to debate on the provision of equity in the long run. And Pradhan (2017) calls for careful planning and management when high density is used to support compact development, stating that simply increasing population density, building proximity, and number of residential units does not translate to urban sustainability. For sustainability to be attained, all components (social, economic, and environmental) should be addressed.

Therefore, future research could focus on the links between sustainability and compact development in attaining equity which my research only just sheds light upon. Several authors in my research have argued that sustainability would not easily be achieved by following the compact development agenda of increasing densities at urban cores. And though compact developments tend to operate in ways that are similar to sustainable development, the link cannot easily be determined. Density on the other hand which is a tool for achieving compact development is difficult to define and measure. My research made some measurements to density in a bid to establish if my study area Metrotown had experienced growth over the years. Future research could determine other ways to define density and determine if the growth brought by density is equitable enough to link it to sustainability.

To conclude, I take this excerpt from the founding fathers of planning in the Metro Vancouver region and their original idea why planning is important in the Lower Mainland Looks Ahead 1952 document that states:

The aim of regional planning is to anticipate certain basic needs of man; to assess his resources; and to advise him as to the wisest use of his resources. Since both needs and resources are constantly changing, planning is necessarily a continuous process (LMRPB 1952, p.38)

Planning would always need to occur at various levels for adequate management of scarce resources present to humans. Several authors like Lefevre (1998), PASSI (2003), and Lovering (1999) believe that economic development of the region is a key motivator for the metropolitan governance approach to regional planning. The governance structure to planning enables what McCann (2011) refers to as 'policy mobilities' to reinforce consensus building towards achieving various kinds of

developments. This cooperative process could include compact developments that advocate for higher densities which Charmes and Keil (2015) and Tsai (2005) would refer to as 'buzzwords' intended to obscure the real intentions of intensifying urban areas. In the end, both the federal and provincial governments may need to take up more responsibility in tackling issues (such as affordable housing) that go beyond the fiscal scope of regional governance.

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Appendix. A Selection of Interview Questions

1. Tell me about the increasing density of the regional town centres such as (Metrotown) under the RGS. What directions does the region take to ensure that growth is even? What are the consequences for having uneven growth from density increases? How does Metro Vancouver deal with this?
2. What does the Regional authority Metro Vancouver think of its influence towards the culture of economic competition between municipalities here?
3. Is there any sense that the benefits of integrating regional planning into municipal planning and development efforts are geared towards economic development not just for the region but the area within the municipality as a whole?
4. What do you envision to be the greatest benefit with having a compact urban development form for Metrotown? What economic implications do you think such urban form can bring to the character of Metrotown and Burnaby if it is not pursued?
5. What do you consider to be the greatest demerit of not aligning municipal efforts towards urban development and planning with that of the Metro Vancouver guidelines?
6. From a Municipal point of view would you say that regional planning through the RGS has impacted significantly to the urban development form of Metrotown? And what do you perceive to be the implications of this?
7. Is there a sense of confidence by you that the immense densification that has been experienced over the past decade particularly in Metrotown is sufficient for both the city's growth status and that of the region?
8. Are you confident that such approach of increased density is capable of addressing issues such as housing affordability? Given that increased density does not necessarily equate to increased opportunities for affordable housing.

9. Does presently having one of the strongest housing strategies via ousting the demoviction approach to increasing density prove any major or minor setbacks to the City's capacity to achieve regional commitments towards compact density?
10. What does TransLink think of its role in advancing connectivity across the Metro Vancouver region and subsequently supporting densification of urban centres?
11. Tell me about the Implementation of TransLink's Frequent Transit Network for Urban Centres. Are there any targets or expectations particularly for regional town centres? How were these developed and evaluated?
12. What do you think could be the impacts (negative/positive) for land use in the region and for the environment through major transportation investments?