



Foundations

For our future

2

CAPITAL SUMMIT

KEY FINDINGS OF THE RESEARCH ON THE GROWTH STRATEGY OPTIONS

Highlights of the Technical Analysis:

1. While no one option clearly stands out as a preferred strategy, a modified Metropolitan Core and Major Centres option may work best.
2. There are strengths and weaknesses of each strategy and each can be improved to better respond to regional priorities.
3. There are challenges common to all options and trade-offs that must be considered.

Highlights of the Public Opinion Survey:

1. The overwhelming majority of respondents indicated it would be more acceptable for the CRD and all municipalities to adopt a co-ordinated strategy rather than a laissez-faire approach or no strategy at all.
2. Respondents supported the six strategic elements identified in the RGS Alternatives.
3. The most preferred option is the Hierarchy of Walkable Centres; but the preferences differ by subregion.

The key conclusions of both studies will be presented and discussed at Capital Summit 2.

Summary of the Technical Analysis

A technical evaluation of the four regional growth strategy options was carried out by a multi-disciplinary team of consultants led by CitySpaces Consulting Ltd. The options were measured against the CRD Board's priority areas and criteria, using extensive computer modelling and interviews.

The overall conclusion of the technical evaluation is that while all options perform reasonably well against the CRD's priorities and criteria, no one option clearly stands out as a preferred strategy.

While there is no one clear preference, the consultants do suggest a modified option given modest growth: a reconfigured Metropolitan Core and Major Centres option, combined with modest additional densification in the Core Area municipalities. If growth is faster, the Transit-Linked Towns option has more merit.

Comparing the Options

The four options have much in common: the urban containment boundary, protection of common green lands, the notion of more "complete communities" and a much improved transit system. They all assume 90,000 more residents, 44,000 more jobs and 52,000 more dwellings over the next 25 years. The costs for proposed road, water and sewer systems are the same except for the Transit-Linked Town option, which would require \$290 million if Light Rail Transit were implemented.

The options vary primarily in the way that people and jobs are distributed throughout the region. Each of the options has strengths and weaknesses in relation to the priority areas (see box) and these are summarized by option below.

Regional Priority Areas:

- Managing and Balancing Growth
- Transportation
- Economic Development
- Environment and Resources
- Housing and Social Well-being

Option 1: Base Strategy of Urban Containment

The Base Strategy is characterized by a somewhat disperse pattern of development. It does the best job of meeting demand for detached housing and industrial land but provides the lowest percentage of high density housing (e.g. townhouses and apartments). The dispersed pattern leads to the lowest amount of land within centres and the lowest rate of traffic congestion overall. This option has greater impact on natural resources and the highest risk of losing green/blue space to urbanization. By spreading people out, it also reduces social interaction and the likelihood of "neighbourliness".

Option 2: Metropolitan Core and Major Centres

The Metropolitan Core and Major Centres option has higher densities of people and jobs. This concentration of development provides the greatest amount of apartments and townhouses, has the highest percentage of travel by walking and facilitates the highest level of social contact. The high-density pattern also makes the best use of schools, recreation centres and health facilities. One weakness of this strategy is that it has the lowest availability of land for industrial purposes.

Option 3: Transit-Linked Towns

The Transit-Linked Towns option focuses development along a high capacity transit corridor resulting in the highest percentage of travel by transit. The light rail system makes this the most costly option on an annual basis. It does the best job of providing multi-family housing and the poorest of meeting demand for detached housing. By concentrating development along the corridor it results in the least consumption of water and energy and the least air pollution and air emissions.

Option 4: Hierarchy of Walkable Centres

The Walkable Centres option has the highest number of hectares of land in centres and the highest percentage of population within 400 metres of a commercial centre. Interestingly, because the pattern is somewhat dispersed it results in the lowest percentage of total travel by transit, bicycle and walking, and the highest levels of water and energy consumption and air pollution. It also has the lowest supply of commercial land.

Looking Forward

The analysis shows that all of the options can be improved to perform more successfully in relation to the regional vision and suggests a variety of ways to accomplish this. It also points toward key trade-offs and challenges that must be considered in preparing the growth strategy.

Challenges Common to All Options:

1. Greater demand than supply for detached housing
2. Encouraging more density in established neighbourhoods
3. Encouraging public attitude shift to multi-family housing
4. Maintaining affordable community
5. Accommodating an ageing population
6. Shifting from auto-dependent travel
7. Averting traffic congestion
8. Reducing negative environmental impacts
9. Optimal use of public infrastructure
10. Lack of a regional economic strategy
11. Greater demand than supply for industrial land

Potential Trade-Offs

1. Fast economy vs slow population growth
2. Urban containment vs more sprawl
3. Urban containment vs adequate industrial land
4. Urban containment vs green lands in Urban Containment Boundary
5. Employment centres vs efficient travel patterns
6. Light Rail vs bus-based transit
7. Transit system investment: Suburban vs Core Area

Summary of Public Opinion Research

A representative random sample of 500 residents of the Capital Region was interviewed by telephone during June and July by the survey firm of Campbell Goodall Traynor.

1. 82% of respondents believe an Urban Containment Boundary should be created.
2. 98% feel there needs to be a Regional Transportation Strategy. Respondents are more sensitive to the needs for transportation planning than planning in any other area with strong endorsement of a dedicated transit line between Downtown and the Western Communities; however they do not support measures that would make the private automobile more expensive
3. 94% agree that municipalities should work with the CRD to develop an Economic Development Strategy.
4. 87% agree that an affordable housing strategy should be created.
5. In all cases respondents overwhelmingly endorsed the proposal that the CRD should act in co-operation with the municipalities to create strategies and rejected the proposal that municipalities should do this work on their own or that no action should be taken.
6. Option Four – Hierarchy of Walkable Centres was preferred by 53% of the sample; Option Three – Transit Linked Towns by 39%; Option 2 – Metropolitan Core and major Centres by 34% and Option One – A base strategy for Urban Containment by 31%.
7. Residents of the Core prefer Option Four while residents of the Saanich Peninsula and the Western Communities prefer Option Three

The same survey was distributed to all households in the region and made available on the Internet; there were 983 responses received to this survey format. While the results of this non-random sample are not considered statistically representative of the population of the region as a whole they are presented here as further information about public opinion.

1. 89% believe that an UCB should be created.
2. 94% feel that the CRD should work with municipalities to develop a Regional Transportation Strategy
3. 82% agree that the CRD and municipalities should work together to develop an Economic Development Strategy
4. 75% agree that an affordable housing strategy should be created
5. In all cases residents endorsed the proposal that the CRD should work with municipalities to develop these strategies
8. Option Four – Hierarchy of Walkable Centres was preferred by 46% of the sample; Option Three – Transit Linked Towns by 39%; Option One – A base strategy for Urban Containment by 32% and Option 2 – Metropolitan Core and major Centres by 30%.

For More Information

Details of the research findings and a full discussion of their implications are provided in the reports included in this binder. For additional background information visit the Regional Growth Strategy website on the Internet at [http:// www.crd.bc.ca/rgs_home.htm](http://www.crd.bc.ca/rgs_home.htm), or contact CRD Regional Planning Services at 360.3244 (Ph) or 360.3159 (Fx)