

Councils okay 30-year plan for growth

Strategy aims to curb sprawl

BY TRACY SHERLOCK, VANCOUVER SUN JULY 30, 2011

A 30-year regional growth strategy that calls for protecting agricultural and industrial lands and focusing residential growth in compact urban communities that are close to transit was approved by Metro Vancouver directors Friday.

The plan, which aims to guide development in the region, was accepted by 20 municipal councils, the Tsawwassen First Nation, TransLink and the Fraser Valley and Squamish-Lillooet regional districts.

"It is a plan that supports the economy by providing enormous investment and development opportunities in urban centres and transit-supported development areas," said Lois Jackson, Delta mayor and chair of Metro Vancouver's board of directors. She added that the plan supports community building and social well-being by encouraging communities that support walking, cycling and public transit.

The plan is designed to curtail urban sprawl through an "urban containment boundary," with an emphasis on new office space and jobs being developed close to home and close to transit. The plan calls for the preservation of industrial lands, which are seen as crucial for jobs, but which are often developed as residential projects.

Coquitlam had initially resisted the plan, saying it was inconsistent across the region and gave too much power to larger cities, but earlier this month the city agreed to the plan.

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